THE LEATHER PUSHERS

H. C. WITWER

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A *Universal Production.* *The Leather Pushers.*

ROSE O'RION, THE ACTRESS, TELLS THE KID THAT SHE IS VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN HIM.

THE LEATHER PUSHERS

BY

H. C. WITWER

AUTHOR OF
FIGHTING BLOOD,
KID SCANLON, ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM
THE UNIVERSAL PICTURE
FEATURING KANE RICHMOND

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H. C. Witwer

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Dedicated to

HARFORD POWEL, JR.

"Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend."

—H. C. W.

PRELUDE BY THE AUTHOR

As a result of the wide publicity given the half-million-dollar purse paid Messrs. Dempsey and Carpentier for a twelve-minute exhibition of assault and battery, prize fighting has driven the cleaner and healthier sports momentarily out of the limelight. It is, perhaps, not to be wondered that many a strapping young collegian, poring over his studies, sighs reflectively and allows a tentative hand to stray to his biceps. As opposed to the inevitable grind at meager pay before success comes at law, medicine, business, any of the arts or sciences, the prospect of getting half a million dollars within a couple of years for a few minutes' exhibition of the "manly art" is extremely alluring. That the vast majority of professional bruisers batter or get battered into disfiguring insensibility week after week for a few dollars, that the average paid boxer is "through" long before thirty-five, and that most of them, even ex-champions, die destitute and forgotten, is seldom, if ever, stressed by the prize-fight enthusiast.

According to its admirers, prize fighting develops physical and moral courage to the highest degree, even implants self-respect, good sportsmanship, and a sense of fair play where those elements have been lacking, and, in a word, is at all times a most edifying and character-building spectacle.

A notable example of the latter was furnished last July at Toledo, when Dempsey pounded the blood-covered and half-conscious wreck of Willard from one side of the ring to the other, to the accompaniment of a chorus of such typically sportsmanlike expressions as "Kill the big bum!" As to the physical and moral courage inculcated by the prize ring, I have seen punishment assimilated in an intercollegiate football game that would make the average prize fighter jump out of the ring. For the moral courage, glance at the war record of the pugilists as a class. The majority of our own "fighters" went on the "See America First!" principle, and many from other countries, particularly England, slipped over here and stayed bomb-proof during the recent unpleasantness. Naturally, there were individual exceptions. A few American boxers saw service in France, and Carpentier himself won honors as an aviator, but I am sure that was *in spite* of the fact that those men were professional maulers and not *because* of it. Again, a perusal of the professions of those who were commended for extraordinary bravery in action will show clerks, bookkeepers, salesmen, farmers, etc.—few, if any, prize fighters. Our most decorated doughboy, Sergeant Yorke, was a minister.

The American Legion was very much exercised over the recent Dempsey-Carpentier bout, on the ground that Dempsey, the war-time shipbuilder, should not have been permitted to represent America as its "greatest fighter." Without going into the merits of this viewpoint, when one thinks that Dempsey, who never got nearer France than the Newark (N. J.) Bay Shipyards, got three hundred thousand dollars for fighting

one man a few minutes with a pair of eight-ounce gloves and that the average doughboy got thirty-three dollars a month for fighting a couple of million men for a year with a bayonet, it is not hard to sympathize with those indignant ex-members of the A. E. F. —thousands of whom are jobless and recovering from grievous wounds.

The impression of one who by some years of actual experience has accumulated a little first-hand knowledge of the sordid atmosphere surrounding modern professional pugilism (not amateur boxing)—an admirable exercise and a vastly different sport—is that it is a great thing to keep away from. It is no more conducted with the idea of improving the breed of the genus *homo* than present-day horse racing is devoted to the improvement of the breed of the horse. To the young, clean, husky youth who is regarding a career in the prize ring with a contemplative eye, I would suggest a ringside seat, not at a championship battle, but at some of the bouts between second- and third-raters, where he would naturally begin his own apprenticeship. Let him observe the contestants and their "handlers," listen to the supervile admonitions or expletives hurled at a battered loser by the crowd, absorb some of the general atmosphere—and then make his choice.

H. C. W.

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ROUND ONE

"THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS"

Me and Cockeyed Egan was tourin' "God's Own Country" (Russian for the West), where the natives would rather be Harold Bell Wright than be president, each with a stable of battlers, pickin' up *beaucoup* sugar by havin' 'em fight each other over the short routes, when Kane Halliday skidded across my path. Besides Beansy Mullen and Bearcat Reed, a coupla heavies, I had a good welter in Battlin' Lewis, and Egan had K. O. Krouse, another tough boy, which made up a set. Them last two babies mixed with each other more times a month than a chorus girl uses a telephone, "without either gaining a decided advantage," as the newspapers innocently remarks. They was steppin' out with each other about four times a week, playin' a different burg each night, and everything was jake till K. O. Krouse shook a mean dice and win $28 from Battlin' Lewis on the ways to Toledo, where we had 'em scheduled to go twelve fast rounds to a draw. Lewis broods and mutters over that for the balance of the railroad ride and knocks

Krouse dead in the first frame that night. On account of this cuckoo forgettin' he was a box fighter, and therefore not supposed to get mad, we lose five other bouts we are signed up for with Krouse, which outa petty revenge refused to fight my boy any more. Cockeyed Egan is all for goin' back to New York, because, as he says, if they have took wrestlin' bouts off of the list of felonies there again they certainly oughta stand for the Krouse-Lewis act, where the boys is positively guaranteed to try in the last second of the final round, anyways!

I'm just puttin' a handful of the hotel towels in my suit case on account of you never can tell when they will come in handy, when a bell hop appears at the door and makes me a present of the followin' cable:

Guarantee you thousand Cleveland Bearcat Reed vs. One-Punch Loughlin. Wire if right. DUMMY CARNEY.

Now, this One-Punch Loughlin looked like the next heavyweight champ to the disrobed eye right then. He had clouted his way through the rest of the large boys like Dewey went through Manila Bay, and his knockout record sounded like the first two pages of the phone book. Dummy Carney was his manager, and *him* wirin' me, instead of the club doin' it, was the office that friend Dummy had somethin' cooked up. Sendin' Bearcat Reed into a ring with this rough Loughlin person was like enterin' a armless wonder in a bowlin' tourney. If Loughlin was tryin', my battler wouldn't have a chance if they let him climb through the ropes with a ax in each hand; but for a guarantee of a thousand fish I would let Bearcat Reed box five starvin' lions and a coupla irritated wildcats in the

middle of the jungle! I wired Dummy Carney "Sold!" grabbed the Bearcat, and lammed for Cleveland. On the en route the sacrifice wants to know how much they is in this fracas for him. Up to that time the Bearcat had the idea that the only guys in the world which eat regular was Al Vanderbilt and Jack Rockefeller.

"Well," I says, "you oughta grab about three hundred men for your end. That's if you can keep from kissin' the rosin for a coupla rounds. But, of course, they is no use speakin' of the impossible!"

"Three hundred for *me?*" he hollers, leapin' up in the seat. "Say—who am I gonna fight, the Marines?"

"Look here, stupid," I says. "Never mind worryin' about *who* you're gonna battle—you don't see it botherin' *me,* do you? You're the most selfish guy I ever heard tell of! I gotta be sittin' up night and day gettin' tramps for you to trim, wearin' my fingers to the bone signin' contracts, gettin' a occasional line of hooch about you in the papers, and the etc., and all *you* gotta do is put on a pair of nice white trunks, step through the ropes, take a pastin', and get paid off. Pretty soft for *you!* Suppose I *had* signed you to fight the Marines—as long as you get the sugar, what do *you* care?"

"All right," he grins, pattin' me on the shoulder, "don't get sore. Tell them babies they gotta leave their bay'nets in the dressin' room and *I'll* take a chance!"

Dummy Carney met me at the train in Cleveland and gimme the works. One-Punch Loughlin was

gonna let the Bearcat stay the limit if he hadda hold him up, and then we was all goin' to Philly for a return bout a month later, which Dummy would properly work up and at which Loughlin would flatten the Bearcat without no more further formalities. The second mêlée would be level, as Dummy figured the Bearcat was too much of a ham to be worth while savin' for any more. For this last fray I was guaranteed $1,500 for the Bearcat's end, and I never seen a thin dime of it, because the second fight never come off. Bearcat Reed steps through the ropes at Cleveland, squints across the ring, and sees his comin' vis-à-vis just climbin' up and bowin' to the wild applause. Up jumps the Bearcat.

"One-Punch Loughlin, hey?" he yelps. "Nothin' stirrin'! Why, this guy would tear my head off! What d'ye mean by throwin' me in here with that baby? You claimed this would be a spread for me!"

"Shut up, you dumbbell!" I hisses. "We'll fight this guy. He ain't gonna try and—"

"Where d'ye get that *we* stuff?" sneers the Bearcat. "*You* mingle with him—I'll watch it!" and he'd of ducked through the ropes if I hadn't grabbed him.

"Listen!" I whispers in his ear. "If you crab this, I'll stick a knife in you the first time you come to your corner! We're gonna fight Loughlin a world series, and this one to-night is only a stall for the *real* sugar, get me? Loughlin's gonna be under wraps all the way, and all *you* gotta do is make a showin'. Tear outa your corner like you're gonna bite his nose off, git mad and make faces—know what I mean? If you make this look good to-night, you drag down

five hundred bucks for your next start. How 'bout that?"

"This guy will about croak me!" gasps the Bearcat, as white as the referee's shirt should of been. "But, speakin' of makin' a showin'—I'm gonna *do* that thing for a coupla seconds, anyways!"

Clang! goes the bell.

A wise-lookin' bird, sittin' back of me, jumps up and yells at the Bearcat: "Rush him, kid, *he* ain't got nothin'!"

One-Punch Loughlin comes slowly out, grinnin' at close friends and noddin' politely to acquaintances.

The next minute two thousand innocent bystanders has gone crazy and Dummy Carney has fell into the water bucket in a dead faint!

The second the bell rung Bearcat Reed, lookin' like a guy on his way to the chair and actin' on the principle of kill or get killed, has charged half-way across the ring yellin': "Old men and cripples, get back of the ropes!" A foot from the dumfounded Loughlin, this bird, which ordinarily could out-dive all the seals in the world once he got in a ring, smashes a right to the button of Loughlin's jaw, and Dummy Carney's comin' champ hits the mat so hard I bet he was pickin' rosin outa his face for a month! The referee counted to "six," took another squint at the study in still life at his feet, and waved the dazed Bearcat to his corner. I hadda throw twelve guys outa the ring so's I could get his gloves off. A artist which could of painted the expression on Bearcat Reed's face as he sat there with his eyes and mouth as open as Central Park, gazin' at One-Punch Loughlin asleep at the switch, would

of become famous on that one picture. The Bearcat looked like a guy which has struck a match on lower Broadway and seen the Woolworth Buildin' immediately go up in flames!

Of course it was a fluke win. It wouldn't happen again in a million years, but—it happened *then,* which was ample for the Bearcat. That lucky wallop got his name all over the country, and started me toward pilotin' a world's champion. Somebody must of slipped all the four-leaf clovers in the world into the Bearcat's hair, because the next day he puts his cut of the Loughlin fight on a 20 to 1 shot, which win pulled up, and I don't see him again for six months. One-Punch Loughlin fin'ly come back to life, and the first thing he done was to bust Dummy Carney in the nose, claimin' he had been framed, and then he grabs another manager, which took him over to England, where the set-ups runs wild. And there we will leave them, gentle reader, for the time bein', because this is the story of Kane Halliday, alias "Kid Roberts," and that's as far as the poor old Bearcat and One-Punch Loughlin figures in it right now. Them guys was just the preliminary birds I trotted out to entertain the crowd, and now, boys and girls, the "next ex-e-bition bout of the evenin' is Kid Roberts, Yale '17, vs. Battlin' Fate, twelve rounds to a decision. Weights: Roberts, 195; Fate—all the rest. Gents, kindly stop smokin'. I thank you!"

The day after Bearcat Reed flattened One-Punch Loughlin and followed that idiotic act by leavin' me flat, I met Dummy Carney, the other victim, in the

lobby of the hotel. One of his eyes is garbed in the conventional black and his nose is a trifle outa true. He let forth a beller of the opposite to joy when he seen me, and I was the best part of a hour convincin' him that I hadn't deliberately double-crossed him, and that me and the Bearcat was more stunned than he was when his battler wilted.

"Well, they is one thing about Loughlin—he proved to the wide, wide world that they is somethin' in a name, anyways!"

"What d'ye mean?" growls Dummy.

"Well," I says, grinnin' demurely, "you called him One-Punch Loughlin, and that's exactly what he was! If you remember the late holocaust, the Bearcat only landed *one* wallop on your ex-man-killer's chin, and he immediately turned in his resignation, didn't he?"

"The big yellah dog!" groans Dummy. "I had him signed for seven fights in the next coupla months that would of win me around twenty thousand berries. From the telegrams I got this mornin' you'd think I had just been elected governor of half a dozen States, and every one of them wires is cancelin' Loughlin. Kin you imagine him runnin' out on me too? If that guy fights for anybody else, I'll have him put in the hoosegow till St. Looey wins a pennant! I can start off by suin' him and—"

"You'll get fat suin' Loughlin!" I shuts him off. "John the Barber sued Dempsey for breach of promise, and all John got was a introduction to all the lawyers in America. Forget about Loughlin—you're well rid of him, anyways. After a exercise boy like Bearcat

Reed knockin' him dead with a punch, they wouldn't let Loughlin in a fight club now if he had a ticket! I'm gonna shove off for New York, and you better come along with me. The way they been breakin' for me, I gotta good mind to get outa the fight game altogether and turn square!"

Dummy begins to clear his throat and rub his hands together for a minute, and then suddenly he turns to me and lowers his voice:

"We kin grab a rattler outa here to-night," he says. "Stick around for a couple minutes, and you'll git a flash at the next heavyweight champion of the world and points west! That's if he shows up," he adds.

"You certainly have become a pig for punishment, Dummy!" I grins. "Who's this guy?"

"Kane Halliday!" he whispers like he was sayin' "The Sheriff of Shantung!" or the like. "How 'bout that?"

"It don't mean nothin' in my young life," I says. "How d'ye play it?"

"You never heard tell of Kane Halliday?" he gasps like his ears is both liars. "The big, now, football star, the weights thrower, the—the—runner, the—ah—what they call a roundabout athalete? *You* know, one of them bimbos which flings a wicked spear and hurls a mean hammer and that there stuff, get me? Why, they claim this baby beat Harvard and the other college all by himself!"

"That ain't my fault," I yawns. "And I can't identify the body yet."

"Was bein' stupid cold, you'd be zero!" snarls Dummy. "Why, the papers was full of this guy!"

"The papers is got nothin' on me," I says, gettin' up. "I'm full of him too! So long!"

But he calls me back, and in about twenty minutes I have got the low down on Monsieur Kane Halliday.

This guy had been committed to college with the idea that when he come out he'd be at the very least a civil engineer, though most of the engineers *I* know learned their trade in a round-house and yard and was civil enough as far as that part of it goes. Halliday's people was supposed to have a dollar for every egg in a shad roe, and the boy treated the civil engineer thing as a practical joke and college as somethin' he had been gave for Christmas to play with. The principal studies he devoted his time and attention to was football, wrestlin', runnin', dancin', boxin', playin' saxophone in the Glee Club and poker in the others. He won more gold and silver cups than the Crown Prince lifted from Belgium, was the most popular guy that ever wore a "Y" on his sweater, and as a reward he fin'ly got throwed outa dear old Yale on his ear without even a reference, let alone a diploma, because he had a prejudice against enterin' a classroom. He hit the cruel world about the same time Germany did, and he played with the Allies as a dizzy aviator.

When he come back he was greeted with the delightful information that his old man had gone broke on the war, and it was up to him to make the acquaintance of Manual Labor, provided he wished to continue his daily consumption of proteins and calories, as they wittily refer to food in Battle Creek. Instead of goin' down to the drug store and quaffin' off a beaker of

arsenic when he heard of this tough break, Young Halliday borreys enough sugar to send his thoughtless parent down to South America for a rest, brushes back his hair, and starts out to dumfound the universe with stunts that would make a Douglas Fairbanks thriller look reasonable. With the reputation he had grabbed off at college he figured he was in soft, and it was only a question which bank he'd start off bein' president of.

It took the kid about a month to find out that the young men which writes all the movies, novels, and plays in which they is a hero amongst the other characters is slightly addicted to exaggeration. The fact that his father had been granted a absolute divorce from his bank roll had leaked out, and his one-time buddies become the busiest guys in North America when he went to call on 'em.

Now, if Halliday had only known a scenario writer, he would of been tipped off to sneak out immediately for the "great open stretches of the untamed Northwest," where, as a six-day-old infant knows, "a man has his chance to live clean, fight hard and square, and win his way to the top with his pure-hearted, fearless, flashing-eyed, and becomingly, though sensibly, garbed mate at his side." Or he could of gone to punchin' cows, reformin' all the rough yet golden-hearted cowboys by his inability to cuss and his ability to fan a six gun, windin' up by weddin' the rancher's sensationally beautiful daughter, which had been to New York and is through with the cold, merciless, and gilded sham of the city, and craves for the sweet smell of the pines, rodeos, cactus, sagebrush, and steers.

Instead of this, Halliday got as far as Ohio, where,

whilst waitin' for somethin' to break, he joined a troupe of professional football players made up of ex-college stars. He played full back and had been gettin' from fifty to a hundred a game, which was enough to keep him both full and back. Full of food and back in the spotlight. The All-Star Team, however, was bustin' up in Cleveland, and it was at this point that Dummy Carney, which could dive into a haystack and emerge with ten dollars' worth of needles, come across him. Dummy had heard some of the kid's history from Tin-Ear Fagan, a ex-pug, which was with the team as a rubber and some from Halliday himself.

"...And so," winds up Dummy, pullin' out one of his favorite brand of cigars, which is called "Last One I Got"—"and so I have worked over this baby for a week. He looks like platinum to *me!* You know what the demand is for heavies right now, and if this guy has got anything at all I can take him around the sticks, and then bring him into New York and clean up with him. In about a year or two, if he's still steppin' out, we'll go after the Big Guy. Say—can you imagine *me* pilotin' a world's heavyweight champ?"

"I prob'ly could if you would make me a present of a bite of that opium you musta been chewin'!" I sneers. "A college guy, hey? Well, I'll stake you to him! I'm off them amateur champs."

"Wait till you get a flash at *this* bird!" interrupts Dummy. "Why, he's got a left hand that—ssh!—here he comes. Play dead, now!"

Halliday was class, they's no gettin' away from it. The boy stood well over six foot and was dressed like

he had placed all of his football plunder on his back. From my first quick size-up I judged he scaled around 195 ringside when right. He had the light, sure tread of a prowlin' cat, which meant speed, and the clean-cut, smooth-muscled bulk, taperin' gradually from the walkin'-beam shoulders to the unusually slim waist, advertised punchin' power. I knew right away that baby packed a nasty wallop somewheres. Dummy said he was twenty-three. He looked older.

Apart from them shop items, he inventoried about as much like a prize fighter as I'm Mary Pickford's double. I thought what a shock it was gonna be to him the first time somebody flattened his nose. It was! But the thing that struck me odd was his eyes. They didn't seem to fit in with the rest of the layout at all. They should of been baby blue and starin' innocently at the world to go with that golden blond hair. But they wasn't. They was a kinda chilled steel gray, and for all the flickin' they did they could of been glass. It was like lookin' into the barrels of a coupla "gats."

He stopped in front of us, nodded kinda nervously to Dummy, and flashed them eyes on me kinda cold.

"S'all right, kid!" says Dummy, catchin' the look. "This guy's my—eh—private secretary. Anything you say in front of him will be used—I mean—well, what *d'ye* say?"

Halliday grinned as we all sat down and pulled his chair closer to Dummy.

"I've decided to accept your proposition, Carney," says Halliday slowly, settlin' back like he was gettin' ready for a long speech. "Now, in the first place, let us—"

But Dummy was on his feet, slappin' him on the shoulder.

"Fine business!" he cackles. "Inside a year your income will sound like the population of China multeyplied by two, and like as not I'll have a couple of pennies myself! Now, they's no use of you gettin' all tired out talkin'; lem*me* take charge of *that* part of it. We start in to-morrow night rakin' in the golden stream. Wait here till I send a wire!"

Oh, Dummy was a fast worker, they's no doubt of that.

Halliday looked after him kinda dazed, and then he wiggles them pliable iron shoulders of his and laughs. We traded a few remarks about this and that, holdin' each other even till Dummy come bustlin' back.

"Now we're all set!" he says to Halliday. "I kinda thought you'd see the light, so I booked you in Sandusky a few days ago at the Crescent A. C. We're gonna box young Du Fresne, heavyweight champion of Canada, twelve rounds to a decision. You'll prob'ly kill that bimbo with a punch, and then we jump to Columbus, and—"

Halliday turns a slow smile on Dummy and holds up his hand.

"Your opinion of my ability is certainly flattering, old man!" he interrupts, "and your system at least seems to have the merit of originality. My first bout is to be with the Canadian champion, eh? What do you propose that I do—start at the top and work my way down?" He chuckled like the kid he was.

"Heh?" snorts Dummy. "Oh—this Du Fresne guy? Say—if he's champion of Canada, then *I'm* next

in line for the English throne; get that? He used to fight in the preliminaries around New York under the name of Set-Up Jim Byrnes, and he's wore out more tights reclinin' on the floor of a ring than any fighter which ever pulled on a glove! Lefty Murray's rechristened him and is takin' him around the flat-car circuit till somethin' breaks. D'ye think I'd let you go in there if this guy was any good? All *I* hope is that you don't fracture his skull!"

"But—" begins Halliday.

"This playin' football was a bright idea," goes on Dummy. "It's kept you in steady trainin' all the time, which saves *me* a lotta trouble." He turns to me. "Boy, he says, "that football thing is one tough pastime. Kin you imagine them cuckoos doin' that stuff for *nothin'?*" He swings around on Halliday again, which was watchin' him like he was a curiosity. "You ain't mixed up with no dame, are you?" he demands, suspiciously.

The most astonishin' change come over the charmin' features of Monsieur Halliday. His eyebrows becomes one straight line, and them cold eyes gets down to about the size of match heads. I found myself givin' a little shiver, and he wasn't even *lookin'* at *me*. He took a half step forward, and I says to myself: "Fare thee well, Dummy Carney!" and friend Dummy's complexion got a shade lighter, whilst a silly grin appeared on his nervous lips. But they was no bloodshed.

Halliday coughed a coupla times, and then his color came back.

"Eh—we will leave the personal element entirely out

of our discussions for the present, Carney," he says, his voice a chill breeze. "As I understand my arrangement with you, it is a purely business affair. We will keep it that way!"

"Sure!" nods Dummy quickly and with the greatest of relief. "And there's that! Now, speakin' of business, from now on your name will be Kid Roberts, unless you get trimmed under that name, in which case we will get you a nice fresh new one and start you over again. That Kane Halliday is a swell name for a collar or a hotel, but it don't mean nothin' in the ring—O. K.?"

They was no argument about that end of it—in fact, it seemed to please Halliday, which from now on, gentle reader, we will call Kid Roberts, as they never was no necessity to change it.

"A lulu, hey?" whispers Dummy in my ear when Kid Roberts has gone upstairs to pack up. "He's been workin' out here for a week up at the Arena Club. I've had him under a pull to save his hands, but he's flattened a dozen handlers with a left hook that don't travel over six inches! That's poor, eh?"

"He looks worth a bet," I says, carelessly. "I only hope he don't blow up on you to-morrow night, that's all."

"What d'ye mean blow up?" snarls Dummy. "He oughta be able to take a roomful of guys like Du Fresne—*you* know that!"

"Oughta be able and can do is different," I grins. "A lotta wise birds figured Willard should of let Dempsey come in with a gun to make it a little more even, but look what happened! You wanna figure that

this boy will be doin' somethin' to-morrow night he never done before, and that conditions is gonna be a whole lot changed for him. The first shock of that crowd is gonna have *some* effect on your battler, Dummy, and whether it'll be good or bad, I can't guess. I've seen some it made quit cold and some it made fightin' fools; it's accordin' to how a guy's nerves is hooked up. Now—"

"The crowd won't bother this guy," interrupts Dummy. "He's fought before witnesses in college and the like."

"I bet he never heard no ringside prattle like he'll hear to-morrow!" I says. "And they's another thing. Your child wonder may pack a mean wallop, but the thing is—can he *take* it? You know this Du Fresne, bein' led to the slaughter, will be all hopped up to make a terrible flash in the openin' canto. If he shakes Kid Roberts up with a coupla chance swings, and the crowd begins to roar for the Kid's blood, will he stand up under fire or will he wilt? Think of Bearcat Reed knockin' One-Punch Loughlin dead! Can this Roberts baby fight with a closed eye, or a busted nose, or—"

"Aw, shut up!" hollers Dummy. "You should of been a undertaker! Kid Roberts won't *have* to take it—he'll flatten this guy with one clout. I'll lay you a hundred even it don't go two rounds—what d'ye say?"

"Sold!" I says. "Dummy, I ain't figurin' your boy yellah. I'm figurin' on a thing called temperament which I have run up against before. I wouldn't be surprised if the muss went the limit, because I'm afraid

if Roberts gets hurt early, bein' green, he'll play safe and be satisfied to stall the rest of it and dog it."

Dummy snorted, but he looked worried. "If he can't take it, I don't wish no part of him," he says. "I'll leave him flat in this Sandusky joint if he don't come through on the bit!"

Well, I went to Sandusky with 'em as Dummy's guest, and also at the sudden request of Kid Roberts to go behind him in his corner for his first fight for money. He seemed to have taken a likin' to me for some reason, and they is no doubt I was for him strong. You couldn't help fall for him; he was just a big, swell-lookin', over-grown boy. For instance, goin' down in the train he made friends with about a dozen kids, and when we pulled into Sandusky he was drawin' pictures for 'em of elephants on the back of his contract with Dummy. Kid Roberts belonged in the ring the same way I belong in the White House!

Dummy was afraid of sendin' him in too cold after the train ride, and, findin' that the club had a gym in connection with it, he sneaks the Kid down there and has him step around a little with a big dinge which was workin' out. They had been at it about a minute when the Kid rocks the tar baby with a right to the body and brings up his left for his man's jaw. But this dark guy knew too much for Roberts, and with a grunt he shifted his bullethead just enough to let the wallop swish by. The force of the punch carried Roberts forward on his toes, and his fist crashed into a steam pipe with everything he had behind it. Dummy let out a wild shriek and waved the dinge away, but

the Kid only grinned kinda sheepish, like he was ashamed he had been so clumsy. The hand was red and swollen a bit when we come to tape it before the fight, but it didn't look like nothin' serious, so Dummy soused it with arnica and let it go at that.

The Kid was cool enough, though a trifle pale whilst we was sittin' in the dressin' room waitin' for the semi-final to wind up, and his eyes happened to fall on a newspaper I had brung in. On the front page is a picture of some well-to-do heiress which had just come back to New York from Shantung or some place where she had been wilin' away the winter. Roberts snatches it up and gazes at it with a hungry look. I don't blame him. She looked as pretty as $5,000 a week would look to a motorman.

"What a rotten photo!" he mutters, half to himself. "She looks fit, though."

"Friend of yours?" I says, drapin' the bathrobe over his shoulders.

He's still in a trance over the picture.

"Oh—eh—yes—eh—quite so!" he mumbles. "How the devil can I get to New York to-morrow?" he inquires of himself, not even noticin' me.

I filed that one away for future reference. I heard a whole lot about the lady afterward—in fact, I *met* her under exceedin'ly odd conditions. But—

It was about ten o'clock when we swum through the cigarette smoke, pushed down the aisle, and climbed through the ropes, amid the dull rumble of excited voices, as the papers says. The mob, which had never heard tell of Kid Roberts before and, for all they knew,

never would again, presented him with a wild cheer. All they knew was that two big guys was gonna mingle, and the chances was excellent that at least one of them would be knocked cold. The Kid bowed very solemnly to the cheer, which act drawed a laugh that didn't help his high-strung nerves a bit.

They was no sign of Young Du Fresne as yet. Roberts shuffled his feet and stared down at 'em, bitin' his lips. A bad sign! The glarin' lights beatin' down on his head, the blood spattered around in his corner from the last brawl, and the noisy crowd was raisin' merry Hades with him.

Some roughneck hollered: "You won't be so pretty, pretty soon, Cutey!"

Another one bawled: "Who brung that chorus man in?"

"Ain't he got lovely skin?" come from somewheres else.

By this time the Kid's feet was doin' a shimmy on the floor. Them sensitive ears of his caught every word, and this rough, sarcastical stuff was like stabbin' him with hot needles, only more so. He was exactly like a two-year-old at the post for the first time. The case-hardened bruiser would of grinned back at the crowd and waved at 'em, and prob'ly got a big hand in return. The sympathies of a fight crowd is as changeable as a woman's mind, but still and all very easy to figure. They're *always* with the winner, no matter if the guy on the floor is their brother.

I gotta hand it to Lefty Murray, Young Du Fresne's pilot. He kept his man outa the ring till the crowd was ready to tear the roof off with impatience, knowin'

what the wear and tear would be on the waitin' Roberts. He kicked and argued about every point like the fight was for the world's championship. He found fault with the referee, the paddin' of the ring, the lights, and was startin' a long argument about the way the Kid's hands was taped, when Roberts jumped up and stopped it. His nerves was shot to pieces. Not nerve—*nerves*. Sweet Mamma, but there's a difference!

"Come on!" busts out the Kid. "Let's get it over with!"

Lefty Murray looked him over coolly and grinned. The Kid's drawn face and quiverin' muscles told him aplenty. I knew what he was tellin' his man after they shook hands, just as if I was in Du Fresne's corner: "Get in close and play for his body. Keep on top of him—don't let him set. If you shake him up right off the bat, he's *through!*"

This Du Fresne looked more like a gorilla than a human bein', and prob'ly was. He was a good twenty pounds heavier than the Kid, and what would of been a face on the average guy was simply a puffed, scarred, and pulpy mass. He growled and glared ferociously at the Kid from his corner, and the crowd yelled like a pack of wolves. The Kid grinned back at him faintly and begin wettin' his lips with his tongue.

Dummy had left the handlin' of the Kid entirely up to me, with a coupla boys which had just massacred each other in a preliminary for a purse of $10, as towel wavers. Whilst I was massagin' the Kid's stomach, which felt as tough and ridged as a washboard under my hands, I let fall the remark that Du

Fresne couldn't take it and would quit like a dog the minute he got hurt. Then the bell rung.

Du Fresne was off his stool and halfway across the ring before the Kid had hardly straightened up. He smashed a left to the body that shook Roberts from stem to stern, but whilst the mob was still jumpin' up on their chairs and shriekin', the Kid feinted Du Fr sne with his own left and then shot a right hook to the head that hurled Du Fresne back a half dozen feet before he crashed down on his face. That wallop landed a bit high, or the quarrel would of been over right then and there. Du Fresne stumbled to his feet at "nine" for the simple reason that he had been told he wouldn't get a nickel if he didn't last at least a coupla rounds. Dummy screamed for the Kid to wade in and finish his man, but the yellin' and excitement upset the boy's judgment, and he allowed Du Fresne to dive into a clinch, where that thankful baby hung on glassy-eyed till the referee pried 'em apart. The Kid dropped him twice more for short counts before the bell, and Du Fresne reeled to his corner bleedin' from the nose and mouth and practically out on his feet. Roberts didn't even have his hair mussed. The joyful mob was with him to a man. He looked a winner all over, and I figured he'd knock Du Fresne kickin' with the first wallop in the next round. Dummy jumped in and sponged the Kid's face, as happy as a girl with her first engagement ring.

The rest seemed to have done Du Fresne a lotta good, and he come out for the second innin' as fresh as a daisy, but not as good-lookin'. The way some of them tramps can recover from a beatin' that would kill

a horse is somethin' I never been able to understand! He missed a wild swing to the jaw, and Roberts jolted him with a wicked right that lifted him a inch from the floor, but he kept his feet and, backin' into a corner like he was ready to call it a day, he covered his head with his arms and waited patiently to get it. Once again the customers jumps up on their chairs; once again they was treated to a disappointment. Instead of steppin' in and polishin' off this guy with a coupla well-placed punches, the Kid stands off and waits for him to recover. I though Dummy Carney would go crazy. "Bring up that *left,* you boob!" he kept screamin'. The referee walks over to the Kid and slaps him on the shoulders: "Go on, *fight!*" he snarls. "What are you gonna do—*kiss* him?"

Now, the Kid's ace was his left hook, which after one try he put back in the safe. I noticed a queer look on his face, as if he couldn't understand how come he had delivered that man killer and yet Du Fresne was still alive. I caught him glancin' down at the left glove a coupla times like he wanted to be sure the hand was still in it, and then all of a sudden he shakes his head and stops usin' it altogether. He simply give up. As far as his famous left hook was concerned, he could of checked it outside the clubhouse! Du Fresne managed to last out the second round by clinchin' at every chance and holdin' on like rheumatism. Right before the bell he suddenly straightened up and split the Kid's lips with a jab that brought a stream of red when it come away. The mob howled, but Roberts grinned and come back with a smash to the short ribs that dropped Du Fresne gaspin' to his knees.

When the Kid ran to his corner at the end of the second round, the sportsmen which had paid large quantities of lucre to see a knock-out was loudly and bitterly complainin'. They was off Kid Roberts for life and tellin' the world about it. They'd seen him hit Du Fresne with everything but the club's license, yet Du Fresne was still alive, which was all wrong. Evidently this Roberts couldn't hit, and a heavy that can't hit is as popular as foot warmers in Hades.

Dummy begged, cried, and threatened for the Kid to go in and kill Du Fresne, but Kid Roberts had apparently lost all interest in the combat. Du Fresne waddled out to the middle of the ring like he couldn't believe his own eyes that he was still on his feet, but, actin' upon advice from his corner, he got to work again. He put a coupla light lefts to the face without a return from Dummy's hope, and then the Kid started to swing with this guy. The rough-house stuff was Du Fresne's dish, and in no time at all he had closed the Kid's right eye and had his sore lip puffed up like a balloon. The Kid made a few weak returns with his right, usin' that dynamite left for blockin' and feintin' purposes only, and the dumfounded Du Fresne got more courage every second. Comin' out of a clinch, he swung a vicious right to the Kid's stomach and folleyed that with a clip on the jaw that staggered Roberts and drove whatever judgment he had left outa his head. He missed a dozen right swings, and then fell into one from Du Fresne that opened a gash under his bum eye a inch deep. The crowd was roarin' for a knockout, and Du Fresne's manager was on the verge

of the hystericals. At a yell from his corner, Du Fresne shifted his attack to the Kid's mid section and suddenly hooked a left and right to the body that doubled Roberts into a pantin' knot. He was too excited to folley up his advantage, or it would of been curtains for the Kid. He fell wildly into a clinch, but Du Fresne shook him off and stabbed the sore eye with a nasty straight-arm right that sent Roberts staggerin' to his corner, punch drunk and gory.

The fourth and fifth rounds was the same as the third. Du Fresne pasted the Kid from pillar to post, cuttin' him to ribbons with nasty left and right chops, but Roberts still refused to use his left, swingin' wildly with his right and divin' into a clinch whenever he got hurt, which was early and often. He didn't land a half dozen solid punches from the second round on. In Du Fresne's corner they was havin' a party.

In the middle of the sixth round, with Du Fresne chasin' the battered Kid all over the ring and makin' a choppin' block of him, Dummy, havin' cussed, cried, and yelled himself hoarse, jumps up and whispers in my ear: "I'm through with this big stiff for life! He's as yellah as a barrel of grapefruit. You was right, they's always somethin' wrong with them gymnasium world beaters. This guy can't take it. Look at him wilt every time he stops one. I'm gonna duck; I don't wanna see no more of it!"

"D'ye wanna get rid of him?" I says innocently.

"Make me a offer!" he snaps.

"Well," I says, watchin' the ring outa the corner of my eye, "you owe me a hundred berries on account

of the kid not winnin' in a round. Gimme his contract and it's even all around!"

That's how I got Kid Roberts. A year and a half later Dummy Carney stood in the lobby of Madison Square Garden and, with tears in his eyes, offered me $30,000 for that contract back!

As Dummy snaked his way out through the crowd, I looked up in time to see Du Fresne hang the Kid over the ropes with a volley of lefts and rights, and the referee was lookin' over at *me* for the sponge. A left chop connected solidly and the Kid slid to the floor, restin' on his hands and knees. The bell clanged at "eight," and we dragged Roberts to his corner and worked over him with everything but a pulmotor.

It's tough to see your man licked, but they is nothin' tougher in the world than to see him licked when you know he can kill the other guy with one well-placed smash! I begged this boy to try that left once more. I tried everything I could think of except Dummy's stuff of callin' him yellah. That's all wrong with these kinda guys. It don't stir 'em up and make 'em go after the other guy hammer and tongs like the novels claims. They get sore at *you* and remember it forever after! Fin'ly I got a wild idea. I remembered that dame's picture in the newspaper and what the Kid had said about goin' to New York. I took a chance.

"You're one swell-lookin' baby for Miss Gresham to see!" I says in his ear, sarcastical as possible.

He looked at me in a dazed way, not seemin' to notice me callin' Her by name.

"Why?" he mumbles.

I held the dressin' room mirror in front of him

You never seen such a change come over nobody in your life. The Kid sees his eye in deep mournin', his lips all purple and puffed outa shape, the bleedin' gash under the glim, and all the rest of his ruined beauty. The one good eye narrows to a pin point and his teeth comes together with a click. He straightens up in his chair and glares across at the leerin' and happy Du Fresne with the benevolent expression of a wounded panther about to charge. The bell rings for the lucky seventh.

The mob took up the bellowin' chant for a knock-out, and Du Fresne come slidin' out with a confident grin, which faded with almost comical speed as he got that glare in the Kid's workin' eye. He faltered in his stride and was short with a right to the face. He commenced to back away and look to his corner for advice, and the Kid stepped in and buried his right to the wrist in his stomach. Du Fresne's grunt could be heard in Paris, and he dropped his guard to protect that tremblin' paunch. The Kid coolly measured him, and, quick as a flash of startled light, brought up his left for the second time in the entire debate. It landed flush on Du Fresne's jaw and crashed him through the ropes into the laps of the newspaper guys, as cold as the middle of Iceland!

"Why didn't you pull that left before?" I demanded, tugging at the Kid's gloves as the perfectly satisfied mob milled out through the doors.

He gimme a odd grin.

I pulled and hauled, but that glove wouldn't move. Fin'ly I took out my penknife and cut it off his wrist. Then I nearly fell over the ropes myself. His left

hand was a ugly-lookin' purple and swelled to twice its size.

"I broke a bone or two when I idiotically hit that steam pipe before the fight to-night," he explains cheerfully. "That's why I—eh—rather favored it afterward!"

Imagine goin' into a fight with a broken hand! *Imagine knockin' a two-hundred-and-fifteen-pound guy out with it!*

"But—but," I splutters, "why did you go through with the scrap if you knew that, you darn fool! Why didn't you say somethin'? We could of called it off and—"

"That's exactly what I *thought* you would do," he smiles, "and I couldn't afford to have *that* happen. To be frank with you, I'm broke!"

He looks around curiously. "Where's Carney?" he asks. "He said some things to me I'd like to take up with him!" His voice was hard again.

"Oh, don't mind Dummy," I says. "He got a tough break to-night—lost the best scrapper in his stable!"

"Oh, I'm sorry!" he says. "Influenza?"

"Nope—inexperience!" I tells him. "Well, let's get outa here, hey?"

ROUND TWO

"WITH THIS RING I THEE FED!"

THE ability to take a unmerciful beatin' has made many a box fighter famous which had absolutely nothin' else to recommend him. Ring records all the ways down from the time Battlin' David knocked One Round Goliath for a goal is studded with the names of these gluttons for punishment whose motto is a steal from the Salvation Army's "A man may be down, but he's never out!" Their favorite punch is delivered with some part of their battered face to the point of the other guy's glove, and they seldom if ever miss. They may never become champs; in fact, the plurality of these babies is usually about tenth-raters, but they'll always be in demand at fancy prices because the difference between the modern prize-fight fan and the cuckoos which used to sit around Nero and holler for the gladiators to quit stallin' and knife each other has stopped at the matter of dress. The average follower of the manly art insists that his favorites be guys of red blood—in fact, he carries his enthusiasm to the point where he wants to see 'em covered with it!

Few of these here "iron men"—even the handful which has slugged their way to the top of the heap—knows any more about scientific *boxin'* than a hen

does about tooth powder. They can tell the referee from a right cross, and they know that every time a bell rings whilst they are in the ring they are allowed to sit down for a minute and wonder why the other guy was allowed to come in with a hatchet; but the real fine points of their trade means zero to them. They are in there to take it, and take it they do with a set, silly grin on their puffed lips which has taken the heart outa many a better fighter who's slashed 'em to ribbons and punched his arms off tryin' to drop 'em for the long count.

Some of them human shock absorbers has held titles for a brief spell in the different divisions and has been very popular with the mob. Any fighter which will keep on gettin' up every time he kisses the canvas, in spite of the fact that both his eyes has observed the one o'clock closin' law, his nose is away outa line, and a ear is floppin' nonchalantly in the breeze, is bound to make a hit with the customers. He's prolongin' the thrill of the thing and givin' the crowd a gallop for its shekels. Their unanimous opinion, screamed at the top of their lungs, is that he's a terrible boob—but the sight of his gore has appealed to their "sportin'" instincts, and on the way home, in the cool of the evenin', they shake their heads admirin'ly and tell each other what a great scrapper he is at that! Jess Willard, for instance, made more friends by staggerin' blindly to his feet from the crimson-flecked mat, after each of his seven knockdowns in the first round by the jovial Jack Dempsey, than he did when he flattened Johnson for the championship of the world.

I'm always as nervous as a steam drill when I send

one of my star battlers in against them choppin' blocks. On the level, they're less worry when they're fightin' a clean, hard puncher which is fast and clever. In the first place, these bums makes your boy look bad to the crowd. They usually got a awkward, clumsy defense that makes 'em difficult to slam in a spot which will send 'em down for the night, and after you have punched one of these bimbos from pillar to post round after round, changin' the outlines of his face, but not his determination to stay the limit, the mob gets the idea that you can't hit, and they're off you!

Many a promisin' youngster has had his hopes wrecked right at the start by one of them human derelicts of the ring—them guys whose only claim to fame is that they can take it! The ambitious kid tears into 'em with everything he's got, and in a coupla rounds he's pounded 'em to a pulp, but still they keep comin' in for more. Every time he flattens 'em they bounce up like a rubber ball, till fin'ly the kid begins to get discouraged. The disappointed crowd is givin' him the raspberry, demandin' the knock-out they paid to see. His confidence fades, and he soon starts wonderin' if he's lost his wallop. He's hit this tramp so hard and often that it's like liftin' a coupla tons of lead to raise his arms, and now his hooks and jabs apparently ain't even shakin' the other guy up. In desperation the kid throws science to the winds and comes in wide open, both hands workin' for that grinnin' battered jaw—that red leer that dances before his face. This is what the tramp has waited all night for! Not havin' landed a dozen clean wallops himself, he's com-

paratively fresh. He feels the sting leavin' the kid's frantic punches; he sees he's losin' heart by his shiftin', worried eyes, and the next minute the crowd is on its feet, goin' crazy, as this bloody wreck tears in, smashes the falterin' kid with a wild haymaker, and it's all over!

Them guys is prouder of their capacity for takin' a maulin' than Dempsey is of his record as a knocker-out. Their cauliflower ears, busted noses, and dented faces is to them the Croix de Guerre of their trade. A example of this was Bat Nelson, which held the lightweight title against some of the greatest *boxers* that ever fought in that class, for no other reason on earth than the fact that them guys broke their hearts, and frequently their hands, tryin' to put him away. Bat used to brag that he wasn't human, and for a long time it looked like that was the answer. If he could *box,* I can make a automobile. He rarely come out of a scrap without lookin' like he had been run through a meat chopper—the worst tramps which ever stuck their hand in a glove used to paste him with everything but the box office, and then when they was so tired they couldn't even feint him, the grinnin', gore-covered Bat would step in and knock 'em for a goal.

This class of fighter is duck soup for the babies which claims the prize ring brings out gameness that would make a paralyzed arctic explorer or a legless deep-sea diver seem faint-hearted. They point to these guys gettin' up after each knock-down, ripped and slashed to pieces, blinded by their own blood, but still borin' in bravely for more punishment. Well, I don't doubt that a lotta these boys *has* showed more courage than a sightless bullfighter, but my own experience has

been that this here same courage is in most cases more a matter of temperament than anything else. The roughneck, boneheaded slugger gets slammed all over the ring and fin'ly floored. He's half in a trance, and he's only got a faint idea of what it's all about; but his legs mechanically raises him upright again without no effort of his dazed brain at all, because they been doin' that same thing for years. The intelligent boxer, knocked kickin' by a wallop, has been in the habit of usin' his head to think with, and said head is now ringin' like a set of chimes. The crazy yells of the crowd comes to him like the boom of a roarin' surf, his glassy eyes rolls around inquirin'ly, and in the ten seconds it takes him to clear his dome and try to figure what he'll do when he gets up he's counted out and often called yellah. Nine times outa ten this baby's just as game as the other guy, or gamer—he's built temperamentally different, that's all!

My idea of the real gamester is the bird which can't take it and knows he can't, but takes his chance with the toughest the game can produce in his efforts to get to the top! The guy with the glass jaw or the weak-muscled stomach that's gotta win quick or not at all. The nervous, imaginative baby which takes more mental punishment in his corner waitin' for the first bell than he ever does from any guy's gloves and that's gotta lick *himself* before he even faces the cuckoo in the other corner. The kind that, if he fought eighty-six times a day every day in the week, would never get over the soul-tearin' torture of the sneerin', howlin' mob around the ring, the sight of blood, the glarin' calcium over his head, the jarrin' impact of fist on

bone, the possibilities in the other guy's left—but still sets himself, steadies his tremblin' knees, and goes in to kill or get killed with a grin on his chalk-white face!

You might say a guy like that don't belong in the ring. Then neither did them kinda babies belong in the trenches; neither do they belong *anywheres* in life! Didn't we all kinda lick our dry and tremblin' lips a little shaky like in the zero hour over there? Ain't they a mob of us which ain't beyond bitin' our nails a bit whilst waitin' for any of life's Big Crashes to come? But, Sweet Mamma, when them temperamental boys *does* get under way! A flash at the dope-book on any sport, profession, trade, gift, art, science, or bad habit will show you what happens then!

I made one of them guys heavyweight champion of the world—how 'bout that?

After Kid Roberts had won his first professional fight by knockin' out Young Du Fresne in Sandusky, we have to lay aside the gloves for a spell on account of the Kid havin' busted them small bones in his left hand. Some weeks after that quarrel the Kid comes up one mornin' to our mutual room in the worst hotel in Sandusky, which is the equivalent to sayin' the worst hotel in the world. He holds up his invalid hand.

"All healed," he says, wavin' it at me. "I'm ready to box again. Pack up your stuff, we're going to New York!"

I walked over and examined his paw with the greatest of care. It still looked swollen and ugly to me.

"Better give it another week to set, Kid," I says. "If you bust it again, it's liable to tie us up for a

coupla months, and the bank roll's punch drunk already. Why, I'd gamble you couldn't hit hard enough with that left right now to crack a vacant eggshell!"

The Kid presents me with a pleasant grin and commences lookin' around the room. Over in the corner is a long board which with a iron I have borreyed from our genial landlord for the sensational purpose of pressin' my suit. Still grinnin', the Kid picks it up, leans it at a angle against the wall, grabs a towel from the washstand, and makes a coupla turns of it around his left hand. Before I can jump across the room and grab him he has stood off and split that board in two with a punch!

"Now," he remarks, tossin' the towel on the bed and reachin' underneath for his suit case, "we have *that* all settled! You hustle down to the depot and find out what's the next train for New York. You might as well get the tickets and sleepers while you're there too."

"With what?" I asks, makin' him a gift of a sarcastical smile.

He swings around and looks at me kinda puzzled. "Why—ah—we have something like a hundred dollars, haven't we?" he says.

"Somethin' like it, sure!" I agrees, reachin' in a pocket and pullin' out a bill. "Here's us!" I says, showin' it to him. "This is somethin' like a hundred berries, only it's unfortunately got a *ten* on it in the corners instead of a hundred. Still, as you say, it's *somethin'* like a hundred—same color, same size, same—"

"Where's all the money you had last night when

you went down to pay our hotel bill?" he demands, shuttin' me off with a glare.

"Well," I says, "it's like this: I run into a bevy of traveling salesmen in the lobby, and one word led to the other. If I'd only had brains enough to quit at two this a. m., I'd of been three hundred men to the good, but that last baby shook a nasty pair of dice!"

Kid Roberts drops his suit case and sinks down on the bed, first havin' the foresight to hurl both pillows and the busted ironin' board at me.

"And the funny part of it is," I goes on, duckin' the above utensils and cheerfully lightin' a cigarette, "I forgot to pay the hotel bill!"

"Oh, that's the *funny* part, eh?" he snarls, gettin' up and approachin' me with a three-alarm fire in each eye. "Well, I'm going to pound you into a jelly—see if you can get a laugh out of that!"

"Behave!" I says, slidin' gracefully back of the bureau. "Don't let's get silly and partake of vulgar fistycuffs. If I didn't *know* you could take me, I wouldn't be managing you; but maulin' me will get neither of us nowheres. I got in that African golf tourney because I thought I could grab off enough doubloons to take us into New York *right*. The breaks went against me and them guys gypped me and made me lose it—that's all! Ain't *you* ever did nothin' foolish?"

He stops short and scowls at me for a minute, and then all of a sudden his exceedin'ly handsome face clears and that good-natured kid grin of his makes me acquainted with all his lovely white teeth.

"You're right, old man!" he laughs, slappin' me on

the back. "I—I beg your pardon for losing my temper. I'm so infernally anxious to get back to New York that I— Oh, hang it, man—I've simply *got* to be there by the end of the week!"

He walks over to the window and stares out at Sandusky, tappin' a nervous foot on the floor and bitin' his lip. I stretched out comfortably on the so-called bed and give forth the impression that I was readin' the mornin' paper. In the reality I was watchin' him. I liked that kid—you couldn't help it! He got closer to me in the time we punched, argued, stalled, and lucked our way into a world's championship than any fighter I ever had in my stable. Big, clean, and as pleasin' to the eye as a sunset anywheres west of Chicago, his whole appearance fairly shrieked *class!* He looked as much like a prize fighter—then—as I resemble Mary Pickford, and I knew he was doin' a piece of deep thinkin' as he stood there at that window lookin' through the greasy panes out into the dirty little alley which run back of this alleged hotel. Think of the stuff that must of been gallopin' through that high-strung kid's mind. He'd been the most popular guy in his college, a kind of a tin god to the other birds which had carried him off on their shoulders from dozens of tracks and football fields. He'd run through as many pieces of eight as Captain Kidd ever seen; he'd belonged to clubs where even the waiters hadda be descended from deck hands on the *Mayflower;* he'd been used to evenin' clothes, soft lights, music, and the maddenin' smiles of pretty women, after 6 p. m., instead of a pair of trunks and boxin' gloves and

the reekin' din of a cheap fight club. He'd exchanged a suite at the Ritz with one of them trick valets to button his collar and fix his "bawth" for a scraggy hole in a twelfth-class hotel—as up against it as Rumania, and with a roughneck like me, which hardly spoke his language, for a companion. A drop, hey?

As I lamped him over the top of my paper I wondered what *else* he'd gave up. Was they by any chance a—

"What's the mad rush to New York for, Kid?" I yawns suddenly. "A Jane?"

He give a start like a frightened deer. He was always like that, even in the ring—a blur of flashin', quick, nervous moves. He couldn't sit down five minutes in a room. In the course of a ordinary conversation I bet he'd walk ten miles back and forth across the floor, remindin' you of a tiger in a cage at the zoo. It used to make me uneasy and restless watchin' him, on the level!

Now he lets forth a sigh and comes away from the window. Instead of answerin' my question, he stops opposite me and says: "Are you—eh—married?"

"Me?" I grins. "No—I got that bump over my right eye fallin' downstairs whilst a child." Then a sudden thought hit me like a wallop on the jaw. "Say!" I yells, jumpin' up. "*You* ain't thinkin' of—you ain't gonna get *wed* on me?"

The Kid smiles and pats my arm.

"Calm yourself," he says. "The most colossal ass in the world would hesitate at doing *that* without a penny to his name."

"Yeh?" I sneers. "Evidently you never seen the

East Side in New York! But answer me this, whilst we are on the fascinatin' subject of wedlocks. I have gave you the low down on myself from the time I seen my first rattle up to as late as last night. I ain't tryin' to jimmy into your most intimate affairs, but is they—*is* they a girl?"

I've seen chorus girls bitin' their tongues for hours at a time to perfect a natural blush like this big Kid pulled then. He let go my arm and pulled over a chair, sat down—a rare trick for him—and gimme the works.

The dame's name was no less than Irene Gresham, and her beloved parents had a bank roll which wouldst make Jack Rockefeller look like a public charge. Apart from that annoyin' detail, they was headliners in this continuous vaudeville of society, indigo blooded and with a pedigree that not even a race horse could be ashamed of. Kid Roberts, or Kane Halliday, as the butlers was wonted to announce him previous to the time he hit the skids, was merely engaged to this gold mine, that's all! Now the Kid had a few blue corpuscles chasin' each other through his veins himself, and when it come to ancestors, he was no Adam, but —*broke* and a *prize fighter*—Sweet Mamma, where did he fit now!

When things was breakin' right for him, and his old man had as many chips as the rest of 'em, he had contracted to escort this charmer to the conventional altar. It was a kinda cut-and-dried arrangement, with the articles drawed up by the parents of both victims, and the Kid hadn't seen his intended lifelong sparrin' partner since he left college, on the account of her

bein' a habitué of Europe. She had come back the week before, and that's why the Kid was keen to flee to New York. He wanted to get the thing straight—put all the cards on the table, face up. Whether they still thought so highly of each other that nothin' short of matrimony wouldst cure 'em, he didn't know. That's exactly what he wanted to find out. All the boys and girls he used to play with when he was steppin' out thought he was a civil engineer right now somewheres out in the West, or the like, and the Kid was very naturally wonderin' what wouldst be the effect on love's young dream when the fair Irene heard he was a leather pusher.

"Well," I says, when he got it all off his chest and looked half relieved and half sorry for tellin' me, "they's only one way we can absorb enough pennies to get en route for the bustlin' little hamlet of New York, and that's for you to bounce some boloney at this fight club here. Since you knocked that Du Fresne turkey dead, you oughta be a card at the local abattoir, so if you'll amuse yourself countin' how many Smiths they is in the city directory, or the like, I'll prowl over there and see what can be done."

"Fine!" says the Kid. "Just remember that we've got to have at least one hundred dollars. I'll box anyone they can get for that!"

Two years later the Kid was gettin' about a hundred bucks a punch. What changes time does bring, as the ex-kaiser is wonted to remark!

I found the match maker for the local club heavily engaged in a conference with some of the directors.

The conference was on the subject of dollar-limit stud poker, and was bein' held in the back room of a liquor bazaar, this bein' in the days when it was not a felony to pass the time of day with a bartender. I waited till he win a pot with three aces, two of which he had the presence of mind to slip himself from the bottom of the deck, and then I called him out to the bar, purchased, and made known my modest wants.

"I might be able to let this tramp of yours work Friday night at the regular show," he says fin'ly. "How much sugar are you tryin' to git for him?"

"Well," I says, "solely on the account of you bein' so unusually polite and obligin', we'll take a five-hundred-buck guarantee and battle anybody you throw into the ring!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" he cackles with the greatest of sarcasm. "Try and git it! I wouldn't give five hundred bucks to stage Cain and Abel with a set of strange wildcats for a preliminary! I'll tell you what I'll do, and whether you take it or not may make some difference to the board of aldermen of Bolivia, but it'll make no difference to *me*. I'll slip you two hundred berries for ten frames with Special Delivery Kelly, provided that big boloney of yours stays the limit. If Kelly stops him before the fifth round, which is no doubt what'll happen, you don't git a nickel! Gimme a argument and the whole thing's off—how 'bout that?"

"We'll gamble!" I says after a minute of decidin' that for me to slam this cuckoo wouldst get me nothin'. "But just as a matter of simple curiosity, without tryin' to delve into your private affairs, what's this Special Delivery Kelly gettin' outa this homicide?"

The match maker grunts and waggles the cigar in his mouth.

"I'll give him a pocketful of tickets for the show," he says. "And he gits a reward of four bits on every-one he sells, besides his guarantee of twenty berries, win, lose, or police—which is enough for the big tramp! You can work out in the club gym if you wanna, and lemme give you a tip—this Kelly ain't never been knocked out, and he swings a nasty right. It wouldn't surprise me the slightest particle if he stopped that baby of yours in a round!"

"Well," I says, "I'm a bettin' fool myself, and them two hundred men we're gonna get won't pay our laundry bill here. I'll lay you my end of the gate at even money that Kid Roberts knocks Special Delivery Kelly dead! Do you fade me?"

"You're faded!" he grins. "If your guy flattens Kelly—not outpoints him, remember; he's gotta *knock* him—you git four hundred; if he do not, you git the raspberry! Why—"

"And *that's* all settled," I shuts him off. "Now where can I get a flash at this Kelly person?"

He presents me with a full-toothed smile and turns back to the poker tourney.

"Go over to the Acme Boiler Works any time between eight in the mornin' and four-thirty in the afternoon," he says. "Ask anybody and they'll point out Kelly. He's knowed as Paddy over there; but the minute he gits in the ring with that meal ticket of yours, you'll both find out why they call him 'Special Delivery'!"

Whilst I was palely ruminatin' over the interestin'

fact that I was gonna send my kid in against a tough boiler maker named Paddy Kelly, which had likewise earned the ring title of "Special Delivery," I happened to glance around and I seen the match maker and his boy friends lookin' after me and laughin' as if their hearts wouldst break. I give vent to a shiver and leaned over to the bartender.

"Have somethin' yourself," I says. "Ah—eh—what kind of a mauler *is* this guy Kelly?"

"Tough!" he says, shakin' his head from the one side to the other. "Terrible tough! He don't *know* nothin', but brother, he can hit like one of them pneumatical sledges, and he's a pig for chastisement. He's mingled with all the good ones, and none of 'em could do a thing with him in the regards to a knock-out. They all half killed Kelly, but he was still in there swingin' with 'em at the final bell. It looks to me like that green kid of yours is scheduled for a pastin'!"

"It looks to me too!" I says, and proceeded on my way.

I drilled back to the hotel as cheerful as a yegg on his way to get sentenced, but I managed to bring forth a smile for the Kid. I told him I had grabbed a set-up for him named Kelly which called himself "Special Delivery" because he went out so quick, cleverly leavin' the slight detail that I had bet our end of the purse on a knock-out out of the conversation.

That Friday night, at the bewitchin' hour of ten, Kid Roberts climbed through the ropes at the Crescent A. C. of Sandusky, accompanied by me and

a dinge middleweight I had hired for two bucks to help handle him. The mob give the Kid a mild greetin', and then down the aisle, through the haze of smoke, comes what I thought at first was Washington's Monument with a bath robe on. It turned out to be nothin' less than Special Delivery Kelly, which Kid Roberts is soon gonna be versus. The second the customers piped him I thought the roof of the clubhouse was comin' off, and for all I know it did! Everybody in the joint, includin' a leather-lunged delegation of honest hearts and willin' hands from the boiler works, climbs up on their chairs and lets forth three hundred rousin' cheers for Monsieur Kelly, which said gent acknowledges by several noncommittal short bobs of his bullet head and a coupla ferocious scowls at our corner. If this cuckoo wasn't a yard over six foot, then I'm the next king of France, and his weight was announced at a triflin' 240. I heaved a sigh of relief when I heard that. I had him figured at about 940! His hair was shaved down close to the temple of knowledge on top of his neck like he had not five minutes ago completed a course in Sing Sing, and what I take it for granted was his face give him the startlin' appearance of a guy which had devoted the best part of his life to fightin' buzz saws with it. The top of one ear was elsewhere. Oh, Special Delivery Kelly was one tough-lookin' young man, I'll inform the hemispheres!

"Good Lord—what a beast!" gasps the Kid after one flash. "He looks like a gorilla!"

I says nothin', but my personal idea was that, alongside of Kelly, a gorilla would look like a chorus girl.

Whilst I am bandagin' the Kid's hands and my dinge helper is whisperin' sweet nothin's in his ears to take his mind off the crowd, the air is filled with shriekin' demands for Kelly to murder him. My boy is pale and nervous like as of yore, head down and both feet shufflin' restlessly back and forth in the rosin. He kept wettin' his dry lips with a shakin' tongue and tappin' the ropes with his hands, every now and then glancin' out at that ocean of sneerin' faces around him and then quickly turnin' his head away again. He was takin' a terrible lickin', and no one knew it better than me, right whilst he sat there in his corner and waited for the festivities to commence. He had nothin' on his mind but that girl Irene, his future, whether this bird wouldst mark him up or not, what wouldst happen when they all found out back home that he was a prize fighter, and, likewise, what wouldst happen when one of Special Delivery Kelly's hamlike fists bounced off his face. Yellah? You never seen him work. Once the bell rung it was all different, and that nervous energy slipped right out through his pumpin' gloves. Temperament—that's all! This big ourang outang Kelly sit sprawled out in his corner, kiddin' with friends around the ringside about the pink-cheeked dude on the other side without another care in the wide, wide world!

Fin'ly I step over to Kelly's corner to have a flash at his bandages. One look was enough! I whistled to the referee. "Why don't you give this guy a ax and be done with it?" I says, pointin' to Kelly's hands. His seconds is tryin' frantically to get the gloves on before I can crab it.

"What's the matter?" sneers the referee. "They let 'em use tape in Ohio. This here's supposed to be a fight, not a one-step!"

I reached down and yanked up one of Kelly's hands before he had a idea of what it was all about. "See that white dust on top of the tape?" I yells. "Well, I know plaster of Paris when I see it, fellah, and we come from New York, not Crabapple Crossin'. This baby is figurin' on buryin' his hands in the water bucket, and that plaster will harden up in a minute till it'll be the same as if Kelly had a rock in each hand. Take 'em off or we don't fight!"

"Strip them bandages!" growls the referee to Kelly's handlers. "We got a dumb-bell from the State Boxin' Commission out in front." He wheels and glares at me. "That ain't gonna git *you* nothin', wise guy," he grunts. "Kelly'll make that ham of yours jump over the ropes!"

A fine, fair-minded referee, hey?

The announcer steps to the center of the ring and holds up his hand, immediately causin' the well-known deathly silence to fall upon the house except for such hot-blooded admirers of the manly art which can't control themselves now that the red slaughter is actually about to commence.

"Final star bout of the evenin'!" bawls this guy. "Ten-round exhibition—" he turns and points to our corner—"over here, Kid—"

"Kelly first! Kelly first!" roars the mob, dancin' up and down.

The Kid was halfway up from his stool. He give a short, jerky laugh and sit down again.

"Over here"—goes on the announcer, waggin' a finger at the other corner—"over here, Sandusky's favorite Irish-American heavyweight, which always gives the best they is in him—Special Delivery Kelly!"

Sweet Mamma!

They bang the chairs on the floor, hurl their hats in the air, shriek, whistle, pound their feet up and down, and seven guys gets hysterical and embraces each other.

The announcer favors us with a sympathetic grin.

"Over here," he says, noddin' to the Kid, "New York's promisin' young contender for the heavyweight champeenship—Kid Roberts!"

A few scattered handclaps for us.

I whisk the bath robe off the Kid, knead his stomach, and rub his eyes, whilst the dinge wiped him dry and kept whisperin': "Don't let him stall you, white boy—'at Special Delivery thing don't mean nuffin'!" Then he starts snappin' his fingers over to Kelly's corner. "We spots you fifty pounds and we takes you!" he shouts. "Was punches dollars you'll be Vanderbilt inside of one second! Ah shoots ten dollars we knocks you daid! Ah—"

The bell cuts him off, and we jump down under the ropes.

"Get this guy, Kid, and get him quick!" was my final instructions to the Kid as with a slap on the shoulder I turned him loose.

The thing hadn't gone a minute when I seen that Special Delivery Kelly's only idea was to stay the limit. The Kid, all the nervousness gone now that he was in there workin', felt his man out a bit and then proceeded to beat him from pillar to post—it wasn't no fight, it

was murder in the first degree! Roberts tried hard to connect with a solid smash that would end it, but Kelly was the wildest thing I ever seen this side of Borneo, and when he wasn't reclinin' on the mat he was divin' head first into a clinch and roughin' my boy with that extry forty-odd pounds of bone and muscle. The referee give him all the chance in the world to hang on, scrape the Kid's back against the ropes, and wrestle him. That and the generous counts he got durin' the four times he kissed the canvas was the only things which saved Kelly from goin' to bed in round one.

The Kid ran grinnin' to his corner at the bell with his golden blond hair scarcely mussed. The house was in a uproar. "That fellow's sheer strength is remarkable, but he's not a boxer!" says Roberts to me. "I'll end it in the next round—I'm not going to punish him any more."

But he had to do it—much!

Kelly came slowly out for the second round, a pitiful sight. The Kid had chopped him to pieces in the first three minutes, and his hairy body was stained a deep crimson down to his trunks. Suddenly he rushed viciously, landin' a right and left to the body that sent Roberts crashin' into the ropes gaspin' and drove the mob insane. As Kelly lumbered in close to finish him, the Kid caught him with a left uppercut to the heart that could be plainly heard in Siam, the lightin' right cross to the jaw that followed sprawlin' Kelly on the lower rope. He was up at "six," pawin' blindly in the air, but carryin' on smartly, and the Kid coolly circled around him, his flashin' left forever in Kelly's battered face. Three times more Special Delivery Kelly dived

to the mat, and each time he staggered to his feet spatterin' gore on the reporters, with the crowd a pack of maniacs. Right before the bell the Kid turns to the referee and asks him to stop it, but that guy shakes his head and motions him to go on. With a dyin' flurry Kelly rushed again, drivin' a jarrin' right swing to the head, but the Kid drove him back on his heels with a beautifully timed left hook, and as Kelly bounced off the ropes Roberts put both hands to the face, dumpin' him on his back in his corner as cold as a Eskimo's front yard. The kind-hearted referee took plenty of time with the count so's to give Kelly a chance to get up and take some more, but the bell at "nine" saved him. His handlers hadda lift him up, drag him to his stool, and hold him straight on it, still peacefully slumberin'.

When the Kid come to his corner I started to slap him on the back and shake his glove, but he waved me off.

"I'm through!" he pants. "I'm not going in there and hit that poor devil any longer. This isn't a contest; it's wanton brutality! That fellow hasn't a chance with me, and he's been punished enough. Get me someone else and I'll box him the rest of the ten rounds so we'll get our money, or have the referee stop this thing I'm not a murderer!"

"He'll never be able to answer the next bell," I says soothin'ly. "He's as dead as Napoleon right now. You just step to the middle of the ring at the gong and we cop!"

I slipped down under the ropes and shoved my way through the howlin' mob on the en route to the box

office to collect our four hundred fish. Two hundred wages and two hundred I win from the jovial match maker on a knockout. As I get to Kelly's corner they is about a dozen guys workin' over him, one of which is no less than my old pal, the match maker himself. He's givin' Kelly's manager a terrible bawlin' out and jabbin' a bottle of ammonia up under what's left of Kelly's nose. Kelly is layin' back against the ropes, both eyes closed—one of which the Kid attended to—dead to the world.

"Pay me!" I hollers at the match maker.

"Not yet, you fathead!" he snarls with a odd look, and then I see they have got one of Kelly's gloves off. In a flash the genial match maker pulls a penknife from his pocket, rips open a blade, and shoves the point up under the quick of Kelly's thumbnail. Kelly jumps halfways off the chair with a yell of pain, and the crowd goes batty again. The lion-hearted iron man is comin' back! A nice, clean sport, hey?

When the gong clanged for the third session I had to fairly throw Kid Roberts into the center of the ring. He was sick of slaughterin' this baby, but the watchin' mob figured he was gettin' faint-hearted, and they yell for Kelly to let him fall. Roberts shakes his head disgustedly and ties into this totterin', half-blind wreck with the idea of gettin' it over as quick as possible. He forces Kelly to lead and takes a light left to the face; then he sets himself and floors the boiler maker with a long right swing. Up bounces this unhuman cave man only to crash down again from a volley of lefts and rights to the body. This time he took "nine" before

arisin' and collapsin' over the ropes, both hands hangin' useless at his side. They is some yells to "Stop it!" but the referee slaps the Kid on the back and hollers: "Go on, fight, or I'll disqualify you—you big dough-hearted tramp!" The Kid shoulders him away, hesitates a minute, and a sponge comes hurtlin' into the ring at Kelly's feet. The fightin' boiler maker's one good eye observes it with a trace of annoyance, and with his last remainin' strength he kicks the sponge outa the ring and paws feebly in the general direction of the Kid. Roberts stepped back and made no attempt to hit him, and then Kelly's handlers swarm in and drag their man to his corner, where he flops like a sack of wheat, mumblin' that he never felt better and still weakly strugglin' to stand up and scrap.

The roarin' crowd mills into the ring, and the Kid walks over to Kelly's corner, shakes his hand, and tells him he's the gamest man he ever saw with a pair of boxin' gloves on. Kelly shoves a coupla handlers away and sticks up his pulpy face. "Yer a dom good man," he grunts, the one workin' eye glarin' at each and all, "but I'd have licked ye in another round. Ye niver would have stopped Paddy Kelly! I've taken mannys the worse batin' thin I got to-night," he adds proudly. "Why Young Horgan bruk three of me ribs and divvil a count I tuk!" He suddenly peers over the ropes. "Where's that blackguard which manages me and brung down on me head the disgrace of havin' a foight stopped that a Kelly was in?" he roars.

Special Delivery Kelly's pilot pushes forward, kinda nervous. "Tough luck, Paddy," he mutters. "But we

can't finish in front all the time! Brace up now, you'll be all right in a coupla days, and—"

"All right, is ut?" bawls Kelly, pullin' himself to his feet by the ropes. "And did ye iver see a Kelly that wasn't all roight?"

"You tell 'em!" grins the manager, still a trifle uneasy. "Now—"

"Shut up, ye divilish banshee!" howls Kelly. "'Twas you that stopped the foight, they tell me."

"Yes," mumbles the manager, backin' away. "I stopped it so—"

"Stop *this,* thin!" yells Special Delivery Kelly, and lets go with all he had left on that baby's jaw!

That Kelly was tough, hey?

Well, after payin' off hithers and yon in Sandusky, and gettin' fitted for a set of tickets to N. Y., I have a even hundred and twenty-five berries left of the four hundred we accumulated from the extermination of Monsieur Kelly. I divided this with the Kid, givin' him the twenty-five, and the minute we have hired parkin' space for ourselves at a Manhattan hotel he disappears. I hunted for him all afternoon, but he might as well of been vice president, because nobody had laid a eye on him or heard anything about him.

In the midst of my search I run into a billiard palace which is a hangout of mine when I am in this burg which electric lights made famous. It is called a billiard palace for the reason that billiards is about the only thing which ain't played there. I play a race at Havana and do myself $250 worth of good, and then I sidle on to the rear, where a exhibition of the gallopin' dominoes, or, to get technical, a crap game, is bein' had. In

two hours I have ran the $250 up to $900, and in five hours I ain't got a nickel, and, in the addition to this, I have lost my watch. I tried to borrey $20 on my contract with Kid Roberts and was laughed outa the joint. I have raised $10,000 on that same scrap of paper, since.

How the so ever, when I fin'ly get back to our inn, the Kid is sittin' on the bed waitin' for me. When he ain't been walkin' the floor he's been playin' solitaire —a combination that drives some guys crazy and makes others sane. I asked him did he see his girl friend, and he says on the contrary, but he had the boon of a long interview with her male parent on that identical subject, and it looked like the bottom had fell outa his stock as a comin' son-in-law. The old man thought the Kid was a *très bien* guy, and he was sorry his father had been careless enough to go broke, but, as the French says, what would you? Perhaps, if they waited 100 years, it wouldst be all different. Maybe by then the Kid would have some standin' as a civil engineer and his father wouldst likewise have dug up another roll somewheres, but *right now*—well, you got the rest of it, hey?

The Kid had carefully neglected to mention that he had turned into a leather pusher. He wanted to see how the sight of this Jane affected him before the show-down.

The show-down come quicker than either of us expected it!

The next mornin' I get the information that no less than Dummy Carney is in New York yellin' murder

about me havin' the Kid now that Roberts looked like a comer. Well, as I remarked before, we are paupers again, so I figured on diggin' up Dummy and sellin' him a piece of the Kid's contract for enough to room and board us till we got a fight. That night Kid Roberts was gonna rent a set of evenin' clothes and find out from Miss Irene Gresham how the course of true love was runnin', if at all, and I was gonna do the same with Dummy Carney, without the evenin' clothes.

Then things happened very fast!

I insisted on the Kid doin' a little road work that mornin', both to ease his nerves a bit and also to keep him conditioned in case we got a chance to fill in over in Jersey that week. We are runnin' through Central Park—the Kid with that long, easy stride which brung home the lovin' cups and the etc. at college, and me puffin' along in the rear with the pantin' gait which come from the years I have dallied with the other cups. Along around Eighty-sixth Street they is a auto worth a steamfitter's ransom stuck at one side of the road, and a gayly bedecked chauffeur is changin' a tire. As we slow down to get around it, Kid Roberts stops suddenly and goes white.

"Irene!" he kinda gasps.

As my name has at no time been Irene I look around inquiringly and gaze upon a strange and interestin' sight.

They is a Jane sittin' in the back of that car, and she is regardin' Kid Roberts with a mixture of about thirty-eight different expressions, of which contempt is away in the lead. She's a *beaucoup* looker all right, but beautiful the same way them marble statues is—

perfect and cold. The Kid is standin' there goin' red and white by turns under this silent inspection which seems to have tied his tongue up too. He had on a ragged cap, a torn and form'ly white sweater, a old, dirty pair of courduroy pants, and a pair of runnin' shoes. The lady fair's icy, glitterin' eyes takes in every detail of that outfit, and she gets further below zero with each second. One of the Kid's eyes has a little mouse under it and his left cheek bone is hid by a strip of court plaster, the result of Special Delivery Kelly's dyin' efforts. A split lip ain't had a fair chance to heal yet, and by the time this girl's gaze reached the Kid's face it was so cold I shivered where I was standin'. The Kid fin'ly pulls himself together and seems to be gulpin' out somethin', and I step away so's I won't get my ears in where they don't belong. As I do somebody slaps me on the back and snarls: "I been lookin' all over for you, you rat! You're a fine guy, you are—what d'ye mean by stealin' my fighter from me, hey?"

Dummy Carney's purplin' face is shoved over my shoulder at the auto.

"Oh, there's the big bum, hey?" he growls, and, throwin' my hands off, he walks up to the Kid and the girl. The chauffeur has changed the shoe and he looks up kinda puzzled. Kid Roberts gets a coupla shades whiter when he sees Dummy and tries to motion him away. But it's too late.

"You big stiff!" roars Carney. "You fight another guy for anybody but me and I'll run you outa New York! Foolin' around with a skirt, hey, instead of lookin' me up and—"

The sudden rush of blood was still dyein' the Kid's

face as he clipped Dummy, and that baby kissed the turf without a groan.

"Beast!" says the girl—the only word I ever heard her say. She motions to the chauffeur. Exit Miss Irene Gresham from the life and adventures of Kid Roberts!

With his cap in his hand and his head throwed back, the Kid stands starin' after the car. Then he snaps his fingers with a short, queer laugh and turns to me a white, strained face, which seems to have picked up five years somewheres since I seen it last.

"And there's that!" he says. "Let's get away from here!"

Carney begins showin' some signs of life, and the Kid stops a passin' taxi, tells the brigand the hotel, jumps in, and pulls me after him.

"Hey," I whispers to him, "I ain't got a nickel, and it'll cost at least two bucks to get to the hotel."

"There's every penny I have!" snarls the Kid, pullin' out a two-dollar bill and tossin' it to me. "Pay it. Now shut up and let me alone!"

From then on that baby was *diffcrent*. I don't know just what the change was—he was just another guy, that's all! No more did he shed a tear over bein' forced to clout the stiffs; he showed about as much mercy as the gentle Germans showed Belgium.

They is a little package and a note for the Kid when we get to the hotel, and up in the room he opens it, reads the note, and tears it up.

"There goes the last link that held me to what used to be!" he remarks, tossin' the pieces out the window.

"I only wish we had some kinda links to hock!" I says. "Do you realize we ain't got the price of a rebuilt toothpick?"

Instead of answerin', he hands the little box over to me.

"Look at that," he says. "It represents the end of another illusion!"

I opened it and was nearly struck blind by the diamondst diamond I ever seen in my life.

"Sweet Mamma!" I breathes. "Who give you this, Kid?"

"The young lady we met in the park," he says. "I am now free to pursue my heinous career without any qualms. That—er—was an engagement ring. When I bought that my father was worth a fortune, and I paid eleven hundred dollars for it. I'm glad—in a way—this happened. It was the easiest way out of a thing that would have been a horrible mistake!"

"Well," I says, gazin' at the ring in a trance, "she might of at least—"

"Not a word!" he warns me, holdin' up his hand. "She is a splendid woman—a sweet girl!"

I grabbed for my hat and held up the ring.

"And this here's the sweetest thing she ever done!" I says. "Wait here and we'll eat. I'll try and get five hundred on it!"

I was goin' down in the elevator before he reached the door.

ROUND THREE

PAYMENT THROUGH THE NOSE

WHEN it comes to takin' punishment I am forced to award the brown derby to the modern prize-fight fan. Next to the wrestlin' addict, the gent which digs into the rent money for a ringside seat at the average one of these "return engagements" between the present crop of professional sluggers stands alone as the Crown Prince of dumb-bells. For the example, one of our present champs has "fought" the nearest contender for his crown a even thirteen times, with first one and then the other winnin' the newspaper decision, mixin' in a occasional "draw" to keep up the interest. Another title holder has met the ex-champ in his class eight times in them brief, chummy, "no decision" things, and as for the second- and third-rate heavies—Sweet Mamma! Them guys has a regular route mapped out for their act, with a season which would make a standard vaudeville team sob with envy. Why, girls, it's nothin' at all for a pair of 'em to box each other a coupla times a week on a trip around a circuit that extends from Maine to California, takin' turns in winnin' by a "shade."

A sparrin' partner which has got anything at all connected with his head outside of a tin ear, soon learns to

avoid disfigurin' punishment and yet give his master a stiff workout. In the same way any two professional scrappers which knows the first thing about their trade can carry each other along for a dozen rounds at a pace which makes three-fourths of the customers think they are tryin' to assassinate each other, whereas violence is the farthest thing from their minds. The oftener they meet, the more sensational they can make the "bouts" look, because after half a dozen such entertainments they know each other's every wallop by heart and could prob'ly stand up and block each other with their eyes closed.

Now, if amongst the billions in my audience there is a blown-in-the-flask box-fight fan which is hysterically rearin' up on his hind legs shriekin' that I'm all wrong, and what I know about the ring could be wrote on a gnat's ear, I would like to gently ask him why is it that there is usually more genuine action, promiscuous gore, and intent to kill in one round of the preliminaries than there is in the average star bout of the evenin'? Well, the main and principal reason is because the $1-a-round birds *have* to make a fight of it or they don't get no more work! Let *them* babies ease up for a minute and the indignant referee is at their pantin' sides informin' 'em that if they don't show some speed he will take the greatest of pleasure in throwin' the both of 'em outa the ring. Then again, gentlemen of the jury, it takes a finished workman with the mitts to stall so successfully that when him and his fellow artist apparently ignores the bell and keeps on sluggin' each other at the end of a round, the mob thinks it's

on the level and goes delirious. A third-rater cannot stall, even if you rehearse him for a year. He don't know enough to slip inside what looks like man-killin' wallops, and when stung he forgets what he was told and fights! He's like the boneheaded but crack ball player which couldn't throw a game for a million dollars in dimes because he's got no imagination—he's a machine. He can't make the error which would frame the thing for the other side, because once he's in there he remembers nothin' but to play ball to the best of whatever ability he has. It ain't particularly because he's honest; he's shy the intelligence to be a first-class crook! The third-rate scrapper is the same way. Tell him for a month to rate the other guy along, pull his wallops, and take a occasional count to make it look good for the "return bouts," and when he climbs into the ring he forgets all about his instructions and goes ahead on his own hook as per usual. Given a fair chance, he'll innocently knock the other tramp for a goal, and spoil him for future and profitable use.

The fighter himself is in no way responsible for the conditions which surround box fightin' to-day. Like the exceedin'ly late czar of the playful Russians, he's more or less the victim of circumstances. Modern professional boxin' is a business as well organized as the circus. As perpetrated in some of the big burgs, prize fightin' is very close to bein' a trust. The boxers on the inside are carefully nursed along, advertised, and exploited the same as a breakfast food, patent medicine, or movie star, and the tough ambitious outsider has the same chance of bustin' into the large money as I got of bein' elected Queen of Montenegro.

Every now and then some newspaper guy, with more nerve than prospects, trains his typewriter on these dollar snatchers and pans the "return engagements" between the leadin' scrappers to a fare-thee-well. The promoters' alibi is that they *have* to rematch the headliners, because there is so few young men hither and yon about the country which is talented enough with their hands to give the stars a battle. This, of course, is 36-carat bunk! In every class, from bantam to heavyweight, there is a half dozen earnest, clever, and bone-crushin' young sluggers which are automatically barred off the Big Time because they are just *that!* The champs don't wish no part of these babies—they're too tough and ambitious. Merciful Heavens, no—why, them poor boobs wanna *fight!*

These and other present-day conditions which I will take up at our next meetin' is what has stripped the prize ring of the sentimental glamour, sportsmanship, and fair play throwed around it by many of our otherwise unhysterical authors and playwrights. In days of old, when men was bold and the like, perhaps prize fightin' was a he-man's sport and may have developed courage and biceps in the youth of the land. At any rate, the guys which traded wallops when John L. Sullivan was the name of a fighter at least made a honest attempt to earn their dough. They stood toe to toe for hours at a time and battled more for glory than anything else, and the winner usually knew he had been in a brawl by the time his handlers carried him outa the ring. There was no percentages, bonuses, or guarantees in them days. The purse was often in the neighborhood of a coupla hundred berries, and fre-

quently the guy which remained upright at the finish took it all!

Sweet Mamma—what a difference now!

The modern boss scrapper picks his opponents as carefully as Ziegfeld picks a chorus. He gets a guaranteed sum somewheres in the thousands for a six-, eight-, or ten-round muss with some set-up which must take what he's handed for his end, no matter if by some miracle he knocks the star kickin'. Then again, if the star happens to be a big local drawin' card, his victim is at times warned that if he trims his man he don't get no more work at that club. The result is that the poor boob goes in against one of them $5,000 beauties, finds the mob all with the native son, and yellin' for his own immediate assassination; knows that if he wins, draws, or loses his pay will be the same; remembers that if he gets too rough he will lose a lotta future bouts at the club, an therefore takes a lickin', boostin' the star's reputation and, likewise, the star's price.

But occasionally along comes a handsome city chap which upsets all the plans of the gentlemanly promoters and the athletic young business men which calls themselves boxers. A tough, ambitious baby will crop up which, besides havin' a kick in each hand, has also got a few ounces of brains in his head and a manager which is not simply a addin' machine. A combination like that is carbolic acid to the boxin' trust. Sooner or later they gotta be taken in and gave a crack at the big money. Then they either peg along, satisfied with the soft sugar and takin' their turns at boxin' the other members of the lodge, or they go in business for themselves when they get to the top. That's what me and

Kid Roberts done, and that's how I made him heavyweight champion.

Followin' the wind-up of love's young dream, and my return from the Merchant of Venice with a handful of the root of all evil, Kid Roberts shuts the door of our bower in the hotel and indicates by signs that he wouldst like me to be seated.

"I have fought twice," he says, "and I've made somethin' less than a thousand dollars."

"That's better than diggin' streets, ain't it?" I says.

"It won't do!" he tells me. "I'm not in this beastly game for the love of it—I'm in it because it appears to be the only thing at which I'm skilled enough to make big money. I'm going to fight my way to the top of the pile so that I can demand enough for my bouts to rehabilitate my father and myself, and then I'm going to get out of it. I'm not satified with my progress to date. I don't want any more matches with those tenth-raters — those battered, loathsome brutes whose very appearance make the Darwinian theory a base libel on the monkeys! I'm sick of pounding them to a pulp for a few dollars. There's no semblance of a contest about those things; it's sheer, wanton brutality. Go ahead and match me with some of these so-called logical contenders for the heavyweight championship, or I'll be my own manager. I'm not trying to desert you, but I want you to thoroughly understand that I hate this game and everything connected with it, and the quicker I get out of it the cleaner I'll feel! I can't get out until I've made good. Is that clear?"

"Oh, easily that," I says, "and I don't blame you as much as a particle for wantin' to make money. There's

a certain time in our lives when all of us gets that feelin', usually durin' the first seventy-five years. But, Kid, you gotta learn your trade and work your way up in the fight game the same as in anything else. You can't make a guy a plumber by simply handin' him a piece of lead pipe and a monkey wrench. You're a pretty good prospect right now, but that's all—just a prospect. Them two fights you had don't mean nothin'. You got a hefty kick in each paw, and you seem to be able to take it, but you're as green as 350 Irish flags. You get rattled under fire, you squander wallops on the air, your defense wouldn't puzzle a one-armed blind man, and you telegraph every clout you got in stock before you pull it. When you get bounced you jump right up instead of takin' a count till your head clears, and you got a bad habit of lettin' a punch-drunk bum dive into a clinch with you instead of shakin' him off and finishin' him. Ring generalship, that's what you're minus, and the only way you can get it is by experience. You gotta be rated along, not rushed. That's what a manager's for. Many a promisin' kid has been ruined at the start by bein' overmatched. As for these guys lookin' like gorillas—well, none of 'em claims to be chorus girls, and you don't have to take 'em out to dinner—you get paid to beat 'em up!"

The Kid ain't said nothin' whilst I'm pourin' this into him, but his face is a movie.

"If I'm as rotten as that," he sneers fin'ly, "how do you account for the fact that I won my first two professional fights by knockouts?"

"You licked a pair of tramps," I says, "who's com

bined knowledge of the art of boxin' could be wrote on a ant's nose. You gotta long ways to go yet before I throw you into a ring with a *fighter!* You'd be a set-up right now for the first good man you met, and I ain't gonna have you knocked kickin' yet. You been shook and hurt, but you ain't never experienced the delightful sensation of bein' socked to dreamland, and if I can help it you never will! A knockout right now and you'd prob'ly be through with the ring—I know you temperamental babies; I had a stable full of 'em once."

He takes a coupla turns around the room to think this over, and then he stops and looks at me.

"What you say may be true," he says, kinda cold, "but it doesn't change my decision! If I'm as bad as that, then I'll never be a success as a fighter, and I may as well give it up and try something else. However, I want a fair test first, and I haven't had one yet. Match me with a good man or I'll do it myself. That's my last word!"

I seen the boy had worked himself up into a fit of nerves, and it would be terrible silly to argue with him then.

"C'mon," I says, "we'll take a walk around to Billy Morgan's gym and see some of the boys workin' out. Maybe you can pick up a coupla tricks for yourself watchin'—"

"We have no time to waste," he cut me off. "I'll never be a champion by hanging around anybody's training quarters."

"C'mon, C'mon," I says, "lay off to-day and you'll be champion a day later then—what's the difference?"

Up at Billy Morgan's I let the Kid roam around at will while I tried to make arrangements to have him took on as a sparrin' partner for some good guy. Billy gazed around the gym, where there were half a dozen of all weights workin' the pulleys, punchin' the bag, sparrin' or shadow boxin'.

"Well," he says, "I dunno. There's not many boys here now—most of the big fellers is goin' around the circuit outa town and the like. Al Kennedy is readyin' himself for his quarrel with Young Williams, but I guess Al's a little too tough for your kid, hey?"

"You tell 'em!" I says with feelin'. "My boy's only started twict and I ain't gonna have him cut up and discouraged by that big stiff for *nothin'*, that's a cinch! By the way, who's got Kennedy now?"

"Heh?" says Bill. "Oh, Dummy Carney—he's around here somewheres now with Rocky Martin and Sailor McGann, them two boloneys of his. Say—Dummy oughta fix you up at that. His guys is workin' out here, and no doubt Dummy will ease your boy in with 'em. He's a pretty good friend of yours, ain't he?'

The answer come from Carney.

I can see the thing now as well as if I was standin' there in Billy's gym lookin' at it again. Dummy Carney slouchin' in with his two bruisers, me gettin' and feelin' pale in the neighborhood of the gills when I seen him, because the last time we bosom friends had met, Kid Roberts had knocked Dummy flat—and the Kid watchin' big Al Kennedy punchin' the bag.

Dummy is a big man and far from yellah. The

second his eyes lit on the Kid he has him by the shoulder and swung him around.

"Well, see what's here!" he sneers. "Little Kewpie, the sassiety boxer, hey?" He raised his voice, and some of the gang stopped workin' to look. "Are you ready to live up to your contract with me yet, you big bum?"

The Kid puts his hands in his pockets and his complexion turns a shade or so lighter.

"You deserted me in Sandusky in my first fight when you thought I was going to be knocked out," he says pretty even. "I have no contract with you, as I consider that your yellow action automatically broke it. If you make one more insulting remark to me or annoy me in any way, I will take great pleasure in knocking you through that wall!"

Dummy' face turned a unbecoming shade of purple, and he begin to gasp like a newly captured trout. When he fin'ly succeeded in gettin' a fresh grip on the English language he shook his fist in the Kid's face and bellered:

"You—you—why—don't you dare to double-cross me, you boob, or you'll never get a fight around New York! Your contract called for at least three starts under my management, and you'll go through with it or you don't pull on another glove!"

The Kid deliberately turns his back to him and gazes at Al Kennedy, which, whilst still whippin' the bag around, has got a attentive though battered ear open to the conversation.

Dummy let fall a expression which is rarely heard in a church and wheeled around to his two maulers, Rocky Martin and Sailor McGann.

"Let him have it!" he snarls, half under his breath.

Me and Billy Morgan started over at once, but we was too slow. The Kid suddenly pivoted around and seen them two pork-and-beaners comin' in. He didn't wait to ask no questions. Rocky Martin met a straight left to the face that dumped him in a comical position at Dummy's feet, through for the day. Sailor McGann was short with a right to the jaw and got a chop on the side of what passed for his head which immediately removed all thoughts of violence from the same. Then the Kid faced the frenzied Dummy.

"If my contract called for three fights, you can consider it filled now," he pants. "I had *one* in Sandusky and"—he points to the two reclinin' gladiators—"there's the other two!"

Wow!

"Clout him too, kid!" yells a interested lightweight. "I'm with you!"

Big Al Kennedy has stopped punchin' the bag and is starin' over at us with a grin on his face. The lace on one of his gloves has come undone and he tries to tie it with his teeth. Dummy's face suddenly brightens, and he yells at him, pointin' to the Kid: "Take this guy for me, Al!"

I let out a roar and jumped forward, but Dummy swept me against the wall with one walkin'-beam arm. It made quite a picture. There's the Kid, white and drawn with a nervous grin on his lips, facin' Kennedy and waitin'. Dummy is snarlin' and motionin' to his hired man to let one go, whilst the two hams on the floor rolls outa harm's way and the rest of the gang quits

everything to watch. I said a silent prayer and then yelled to Billy Morgan to stop it, but the big stiff shrugged his shoulders and waved me away. Somebody dropped a pin and I heard it hit the floor.

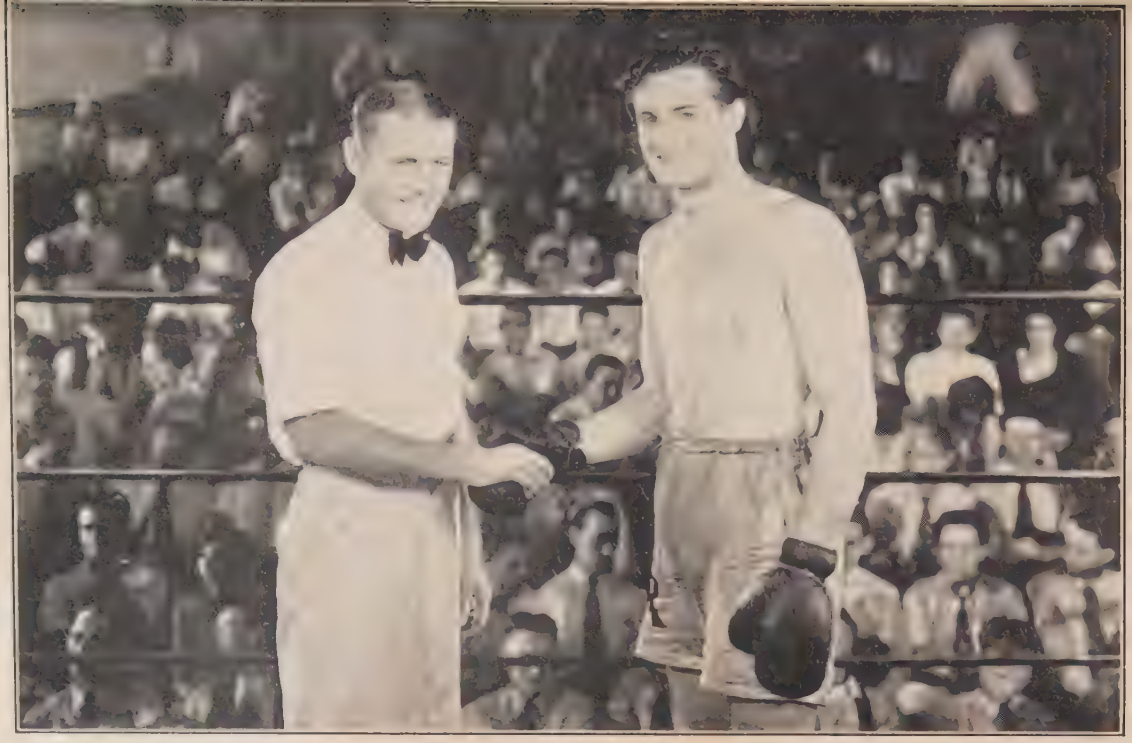
Then Al Kennedy walks over to the Kid, which don't give way a inch. Al looks up and down coolly and turns to Dummy, his manager: "Where d'ye get that stuff?" he growls. "What's the idea of askin' *me* to slough this guy for yuh, hey? If you want him beat up, get some of them bums which is hangin' round here lookin' for exercise—what d'ye think *I* am, a roughneck? I'll box him for pennies—sure, but them gangfight days is over, get that?" He holds up the glove with the loose string under the Kid's nose. "Here, kid," he says in a offhand way, "tie that up for me, will yuh?"

Kid Roberts dropped his half-raised hands and give a short laugh.

"Certainly!" he says politely, and damned if he didn't, whilst Dummy let forth a howl and collapsed in a chair.

A week after that me and Kid Roberts traveled over to the Never-Say-Dry country of New Jersey and seen Al Kennedy put Young Williams out in six rounds. The fight was a dude whilst it lasted, both men bein' seasoned campaigners and both in line for a crack at the title. Kennedy had everything, includin' a nasty straight left which Williams was unable to keep his face off of, and Kennedy used that to wear his man down till fin'ly a well-timed right cross to the button gave Williams a one-way ticket to dreamland.

The Kid watched the brawl like it was the first one



A Universal Production. *The Leather Pushers.*

THE REFEREE CONGRATULATES KID ROBERTS ON WINNING THE BIG FIGHT.

he ever seen, and never for a minute did his eyes leave the shifty, bone-crushin' Kennedy. When that guy stepped from the ring after the mêlée, without even his hair mussed, and the mob yellin' itself hoarse, I turned to Kid Roberts.

"Well," I says, "are you satisfied? There's one of the good men you wanna meet, and you seen him work to-night! You know this Williams is anything but a bum, yet he was duck soup for Kennedy. What chance would *you* have against a guy like that now?"

His answer was nothin'.

When we got back to the hotel the Kid broke a long silence. "Have you made a match for me yet?" he says.

"I expect to close to-morrow with Dave Kane, which has the Newark club," I says. "We'll get a eight-round preliminary with some pushover in a week, I guess."

"Guess again!" snaps the Kid. "My next bout will be with Al Kennedy."

"A good stiff headache powder will fix you right up," I says soothin'ly.

"Either *you* get me Kennedy or I get him myself," he says, "and that's final! If I beat him, I'll be in line for a match with the champion; if he beats me, I'm through. I watched every move he made to-night, and I'm confident I can take his measure. I'm big enough to whip any man I can hit, and one thing is certain—Kennedy will never stick that left in *my* face as he did with Williams. I haven't got a permanent mark to show that I'm a prize fighter, and I never will have, you can rest assured of that!"

"I could rest even more assured if you'd forget about fightin' Kennedy!" I says. "Now listen to me, son—

apart from the fact that you ain't got a Chinaman's chance with this guy, I don't know of any club which would put the match on. The only way we could get the fight is because Dummy Carney would be tickled silly to have you flattened on account of him losin' you. But they'd be no dough in it—you don't mean nothin' around here, understand? And—"

"That's what I have a manager for," he interrupts. Your job is to *make* my name mean something here until I get a fight. Now get busy and use your imagination, or I'll go it alone!"

Well, we argued back and forth till the inmates of the adjoinin' rooms got sick of the thing and threatened reprisals, and the night clerk called up with the information that they was runnin' a hotel and not a dance hall. At three in the a. m. we called it a night after the Kid had agreed to fight one tramp before Kennedy, and I had promised to make his name as well known as Georgie Cohan's in and around Manhattan.

The Kid bein' young, healthy, and care free was unconscious a minute after he hit the hay, but I laid awake gazin' at the ceilin' for quite some space tryin' to dope out a scheme that would get us *très bien* publicity and *beaucoup* pennies. Along around the time they shoot you in the army—sunrise—I got it, and a little while later, when I heard Kid Roberts splashin' around in the bathroom, I bust in on him and revealed all.

At first he registered the greatest of disgust, but as I continued on with the layout his face cleared, and when I wound up outa breath he slaps me on the back and grins.

"Great!" he hollers. "Old man, you should have been a press agent. When I become champion and leave the ring to enter business, I'll engage you as publicity man!"

"Yeh?" I sniffs. "Well, that's horrible nice of you —only if *you* ever win the title *I* expect to *own* at least half of that business you're gonna enter!"

I spent the rest of the day chasin' all over the isle of Gotham from the one end to the other tryin' to dig up the necessary dough to put my stunt over. Late that night, as they say in the movies, I had begged, borreyed, and gypped myself a $500 bank roll, and Kid Roberts had met "the most wonderful girl in the world!" or, in the other words, Estelle Van Horn, one of the merry villagers in "The Girl and the Cream Puff." This was the Kid's second attempt to put over a romance with himself as the leadin' man. He made a dozen wild stabs at the thing which drives the poets wild before along come—but we'll get around to that later.

The campaign to make Kid Roberts as popular as matrimony begin with me takin' him down to a swell photographer's and havin' him snapped in half a dozen poses, wearin' ring togs and—a *mask*. This was nothin' more than a piece of black silk with eyeholes, which fitted over the top of his face, makin' it practically impossible to identify him. Likewise, it was part of my scheme to make him stand out from the mob and get him talked about. Then I started the rounds of the newspaper offices with him.

My story was this: Kid Roberts was a millionaire college guy which refused to give out his real name and wore a mask in the ring so's his high society pals

couldn't discover the double life he was leadin'. In the afternoons he attended receptions and the like, flauntin' a mean teacup, and at night he give himself over to fisticuffs, swingin' a nasty left hook. He never accepted as much as a thin dime for his services, because he was in the game for the love of it alone, not to mention his ambition to become champion. I had him throw out chance remarks about his "cars" and his "country place" with a occasional mention of "the yacht," and whilst some of the wise-guy sport writers grinned and invited us to take the air, most of 'em eat the stuff up and hollered for more. Havin' once been a habitué of Yale, the Kid was easily able to make the college-boy thing sound good, and as for the millionaire end of it, well—Kid Roberts looked and acted more like a million dollars than two $500,000 bills. He throwed handfuls of poetry at 'em, slipped in a slice of O. Shaw, Rudyard Longfellow, John G. Shakespeare, Washington Irving Berlin, and all them old masters of the English language.

They was one sportin' editor which tried out the Kid on a coupla dozen tough questions in order to prove was he really a highbrow, and Kid Roberts was never even extended, comin' back with a flow of words which would make a Boston high-school teacher take carbolic. Fin'ly they get on the subject of boxin', and with regard to a knockout the Kid explains it like thus:

"The jawbone strikes hard upon the thin plate of bone supporting the delicate labyrinth of the inner ear, and the bony portion thereof is driven upward into the

glenoid cavity of the skull. This shocks the semicircular canals, and this shock is in turn transmitted to the bulbs producing dizziness, nausea, and momentary paralysis!"

The sport writer fell over a copy boy in a trance and the next day we got a column in his sheet, with pictures.

But I didn't stop at that. With some of the dough I had excavated, I hired the Kid a swell-lookin' bus, a chauffeur, and a guy with a uneyform like a Turkish admiral to open the doors. A sparrin' partner passed as a valet. Then I commenced takin' Kid Roberts and this layout around to all the fight clubs, where he regularly challenged the champion and got introduced from the ring. He never failed to be a riot for the reason that he climbed through the ropes in a dizzy dress suit and the mask, escorted by the alleged valet which took his coat, hat, and gloves whilst he bowed to the crowd and thanked 'em for their appreciation. You can always get attention with somethin' new whether you're in Succotash Corners or Times Square, and as this had never been done before we was rarely off the sportin' page. By the time he was ready to fight Owney Griggs, who I had handpicked for him as a workout before he committed suicide by facin' Al Kennedy, I had established Kid Roberts as a card and we went on in a main bout for a $700 guarantee. I had no trouble arrangin' with the club managers to give out that we was fightin' for *nothin'*. As long as I filled the house, they should grieve what I got across in the papers.

The night of the fight with Griggs we rolled up to the clubhouse bright and early in our Snappy Six, with the chauffeur, door tender, valet, and nickle-plated hood. Over the radiator is a large sign marked, "Kid Roberts, Next Heavyweight Champion of the World." We stop outside the main entrance for a few minutes, and as the Kid is masked and wearin' evenin' clothes we attract no more attention than a snowfall would in Hades. We occupy a ringside box durin' the preliminaries, and before each scrap the Kid climbed into the ring, shook hands with each fighter and wished 'em many happy returns—also somethin' new. I kept hittin' the mob in the face with the Kid all the time we was there till fin'ly we was arousin' as much interest as the boys in the ring. We left for the dressin' room durin' the semifinal bout, followed by cheers that would of tickled Dempsey. Did that crowd want to see Kid Roberts fight? You tell 'em!

But I wasn't through yet!

The Kid comes into the ring wearin', besides the mask, a blue silk bath robe, ornamented with pale pink peacocks and purple flowers. On top of his regular handlers and me they is the valet *with a tray of hot chocolate,* a silver water bottle, smellin' salts, and the etc., and a pile of clean white towels. He is helped through the ropes like he was a 1542 Chinese vase, the stool is carefully dusted off, and he sits down, takes a cup of chocolate from the valet, a novel from the pocket of his bath robe, and without a glance at the other corner, begins to *read!*

Sweet Cookie!

For a second the customers is dazed, and then with a roar they begin to give him the razz. Some of the witty remarks from the gallery would be barred here, but I had spent a week preparin' the Kid for that and he simply turned over a page, cast a amused smile at one and all, and went on readin'. Over across the ring Owney Griggs and his handlers is on the verge of the hystericals. Kid Roberts, the "Millionaire Society Boxer," certainly did look soft, till the Kid stood up to be introduced to the house and the "valet" whipped off the trick bath robe.

The mob quit kiddin' on the instant, the noisy chatter hangin' fire on a long gasp—then they rocked the buildin' with the hand his clean, magnificent body deserved. The grin slid from the face of Owney Griggs and he sat down, lookin' very serious.

If ever there was a flashy looker, stripped, his name was Kid Roberts—the ripplin' muscles rollin' and twistin' under his white skin like corded steel under satin. A sport writer, sittin' under his corner, threw away a cigarette and immediately christened him "the Adonis of the Ring," and as such he was known to the finish. Alongside of this seven-ton bruiser he was gonna meet, he looked kinda light for a punishin' heavyweight, but the minute the bell rang he looked big enough to take the Rock of Gibraltar—and he was!

With the crowd yellin' and strainin' in their seats, the Kid was halfway across the ring before Griggs left his corner. Workin' fast, Roberts feinted this big ham into a knot, brought his guard down with a jab at the body and then, like a flash of startled light,

crashed over a right to the jaw that dumped Monsieur Owney Griggs on his face as cold as a pawnbroker's eye, just forty seconds after the openin' gong.

So that was all settled!

Leavin' the ring, the Kid got a sendoff which he'll remember to his dyin' day. With the help of the good old bunk, represented by the mask and the "Millionaire Society Boxer" thing—and the lucky one-punch knockout of the tramp—Kid Roberts had *arrived* in his first start on the Big Time and, barrin' accidents, we was headed for the large dough.

The guy which first said "Accidents will happen!" was no Ananias, I'll rise to inform the globe!

The next day, all arguments, threats, prayers, and the like havin' failed with the Kid, I signed him to fight Al Kennedy eight rounds in Jersey City two weeks later. We was guaranteed $1,000 for our end, with a option of 30 per cent of the gross. I had no trouble gettin' the match, because Dummy Carney was so wild to see his man batter Roberts insensible that he was almost willin' to let Kennedy go in for nothin', which, as usual, was what the papers said Roberts was gonna get. I figured the Kid had one chance in five against Al Kennedy right then.

Then my troubles begin for real!

In the first place, the Kid starts duckin' his trainin' to act as a bodyguard for Estelle Van Horn. He commenced to tell me that Estelle "understood him" and that she really was a sweet, wholesome, and innocent girl which come only recently from a fine family out in Parsnip, Ohio. Upon receipt of that sensational information, I managed to get the boon of a interview

with the fair Estelle. As I expected, if Estelle was a country maiden, then I'm Caruso, and a five-minute conversation convinced me that the Kid's swell front had led her innocent little mind astray. She was lookin' for a limousine any day and not no flivver, either, whereas and to wit the Kid actually couldn't buy her a inner tube.

As I had the boy's future in my hands, I told her that and also that no matter *what* he had led her to believe on the way home in the taxi, he was simply a second-rate prize fighter and I was his manager and if she didn't believe it, nothin' would please me better than to have her come up to Billy Morgan's some afternoon and see her gentleman friend work out with the other hams. She coldly shooed me away, but called me back at the door to ask the address of Billy Morgan's.

The other thing which kept me from dyin' of the sleepin' sickness was the Kid's sudden and determined ambition to protect his *face* at all costs from the end of a glove. No matter what come to pass, he swore he'd never leave a prize ring marked up. No cauliflower ears, busted beaks, split lips, or eyes in mournin' was gonna come to him. Outa the ring, nobody would ever know he was a fighter, because once he made his pile he expected to take up his place in society at about where he left off. Now this here stuff is O. K. in its way, but when a guy leaves himself wide open in the neighborhood of the belt in order to keep his beautiful features untouched, it's exceedin'ly dangerous. A well-placed clout to the body has won as many fights as a smash to the jaw *ever* did. Ask Corbett, he knows!

As the time for the fight with Kennedy got nearer, the Kid got worse if anything. Sparrin' partners had no trouble at all reachin' his short ribs and heart, and I warned him that if Kennedy ever threw a solid punch into his mid-section he would break him in two, but the Kid only grinned and called my attention to the fact that they wasn't a pug in the gym which could lay a glove on his *face* and that he was in good enough condition to take *anything* in the body. He also remarked that the Kennedy fight would be the same as the fracas with Owney Griggs—one round.

He had it posolutely right!

A coupla days before the mill a middleweight, which had been trainin' in Billy Morgan's and sparrin' with the Kid, failed to show up. I didn't give that a thought at the time, bein' busy with a million other things. I seen that guy again the night Kid Roberts climbed through the ropes. He was grinnin' at me and holdin' the bucket for Al Kennedy!

The evenin' that Kid Roberts and Al Kennedy fought in Jersey City the coppers closed the doors of the clubhouse at nine o'clock, whilst a coupla thousand bugs fought 'em in the streets to get in. I had the Kid pull his regular stuff—mask, dress suit, valet, and all—and it went big this time with the howlin' mob, which had seen him polish off Owney Griggs with a punch two weeks before. Roberts got a president's ovation when he was introduced and so did Kennedy for that matter. Sweet Mamma—but that crowd was on edge, and when the bell clanged there wasn't a guy sittin' down in the house.

Whilst readyin' up the Kid I had told him this:

"Tie into this baby from the gong, Kid, and he's yours! Don't let him set, keep right on top of him. Forget about your own face and pay some attention to *his,* and, above all things, don't keep your guard too high, because this Kennedy is a nasty body punisher!"

"I'll be all right," smiles the Kid. "But I'm not going to let this fellow cut me up! I'm not going to chance a broken nose or a torn ear for a few dollars—those things *never* heal perfectly and they always leave a man marked. Well, I won't be marked and—"

The bell cut him off.

The instant they met in the middle of the ring, Kennedy begin to play for the Kid's face with that mean left jab of his and Roberts backed away whilst the crowd booed him. This seemed to rouse the Kid, and he rushed Kennedy to the ropes, landin' two hard rights to the head before they fell into a clinch. Kennedy again tried hard for the Kid's jaw on the break, but Roberts, now the picture of confidence, made him look foolish and brought a roar from the crowd by sendin' him back on his heels with a vicious right to the heart. Instead of followin' this one up and maybe finishin' his man, the Kid stood off whilst the mob shrieked: "Go on, you big stiff, take a chance—knock him out!" A left chop brought blood from Kennedy's nose and a second later Roberts crashed him into the ropes with a volley of rights and lefts to the head. The crowd was now ten thousand lunatics yellin' for a knockout. Kennedy dove into a clinch and looked over the Kid's shoulder to his own corner for advice, his face a crimson smear. The advice come

from that little rat middleweight which had blowed our camp before the fight.

"The face, Al!" screams this guy. "Bring it up!"

As the referee tore them apart, Kennedy, badly outpointed and almost all in, let fly a desperate right to the jaw. It barely grazed the Kid, but it made him nervous for that infernal face of his and up came his guard. "Now!" comes bellerin' from Kennedy's corner, and Zam!—he buries his left to the wrist in the Kid's body with a sock that could be plainly heard in South Dakota. The Kid flashed white and his head rolled. I knew what was comin', but I yelled to the Kid to clinch, at the same time gettin' the sponge ready. Kennedy, now wild with eagerness to finish the Kid, missed a coupla swings and then fin'ly connected with a right hook to the jaw that dropped the Kid on one knee. He looked over to me like he didn't know what it was all about (which he *didn't,* by the way), took a count of "eight," and then, grabbin' Kennedy's leg for a brace, he pulled himself up—out on his feet. A feint for the jaw, the Kid's hands goes up mechanically and a solid left under the heart sprawled him dead to the world, knocked out for the first time, almost at my feet! I had started into the ring with the punch.

To the mob of maniacs around me it was only the sensational end of a sensational fight, but to me it was the probable wind-up of a chance to make a million! All I could think as I helped carry the Kid to his corner was would he ever *forget* he had been knocked cold, or was this his finish and mine?

The first thing the Kid called for in the dressin'

room was—a mirror. When he seen there wasn't a scratch on his face, he grinned.

"Sorry!" he says. "Are you through?"

"What d'ye mean through?" I snarls. "We're just *beginnin'*—or maybe *you* got enough, hey?"

The grin gets broader.

"I had to get it *some time,* I suppose," he says, kinda thoughtful. Then: "I think this fight will do me a lot of good—I learned a pile of things while it lasted. You know, frankly, in spite of this reversal to-night, I feel in my heart that I can whip that fellow!"

"There's no question about it!" I says. "You'd of flattened him sure to-night if you hadn't been so damn careful of gettin' your face mussed up. Why, you had him—"

"Get him for me again!" he butts in. "I'll start conditioning myself again to-morrow!"

Not bad for a guy which has just been knocked, hey?

I turned on the old thinker again that night and several days later I signed Roberts to fight Kennedy six rounds in Philly, the middle of the followin' month. I had to take $600. By a strange coincidence, I also brung a new sparrin' partner around to Billy Morgan's to work out with the Kid. This baby and Roberts had been sparrin' lightly for a few minutes, when who appears in the doorway but Estelle Van Horn, which had selected that day to see for herself how her boy friend evaded the poorhouse. I called to the Kid, and he turned his head. The other guy prob'ly didn't hear me, because on the instant he

swung a roundhouse left, square on the Kid's unprotected face! Roberts staggered back, recovered, and put both gloves to his nose. We all rushed over, the sparrin' partner chokin' apologies and scared stiff and some of the other handlers tryin' to stop the flow of gore. Whilst waitin' for the medico, I felt the Kid's nose with a experienced and eager hand—they was no doubt about it, it was broke bad and would carry a dent as long as he lived. In the excitement the fair Estelle beat it.

We was sittin' in the room at the hotel some hours later when the phone rung. A cold female voice asks for "Mister Roberts." The conversation wasn't long and consisted on the Kid's part of the followin':

"Hello . . . yes . . ." (a long silence). "But, my dear girl . . ." (another and longer silence). "Very well, Miss Van Horn . . . good-by!"

With reference to nobody in particular, the Kid bursts out as he slams up the receiver:

"She saw me in the gym—she called me a pork-and-beaner, whatever *that* may be. She— Good Heavens, her *language!*—and I thought— Say, can you tell me why I ever thought that girl was— Why, she fooled me completely."

"They run that way sometimes," I says carelessly. "Now, that beak of yours will be O. K. in—"

He's lookin' in the mirror.

"If I hadn't been so careful of my nose, I would have stepped into Kennedy and beaten him sure!" he murmurs, with a half smile. "But I got knocked out saving it and then a *sparring partner* breaks it in training. A jest of the gods! Well, it's done and in-

directly it will be a great thing for me—I've got the badge of my profession now, and at least there's one worry off my mind! Beginning to-day, I'm in this thing heart and soul. I'll take no more foolish precautions—as you say, one can't make catsup without breakin' some tomatoes. Watch me step into them and treat 'em rough now!"

"Sixty-eight cheers!" I grins. "That's just what I figured—I mean, you got the right idea, son!"

"Isn't fate the playful jade?" he says. "Still I almost feel like rewarding that fellow for that punch on the nose—it will probably make *me* a fortune! What's his name anyhow?"

"Search me!" I says, reachin' for my hat. "Them tramps is usually all 'One-Round' somethin' or other. Let's get some chow."

I didn't think it necessary to tell Kid Roberts that, speakin' of rewards, I had already rewarded the guy which busted his nose before I brung him in to do it, and his name was—well, Heroic Treatment is as good as any, I guess!

ROUND FOUR

A FOOL AND HIS HONEY

THE average admirer of the manly art of aggravated assault has the idea that a prize fighter's manager is the gent the leather pusher has got to give half his wages to, which sits in his meal ticket's corner bawlin' him out every time the other young man clouts him earnestly on the features—and that's about all. Nothin', outside of the Arabian Nights, could be farther from the facts. A first-class pilot is to a box fighter what a race track is to a jockey—he's got to have one or he don't get nowheres. There is no doubt whole coveys of boxin' impresarios which is little more than towel wavers and nickel hiders, but a real, Big Time manager of pugs hustles harder for his pennies than a bill poster on a windy day. He's got to have the conscience of a loan shark, the shrewdness of Shylock's old man, the nerve of a blind tightrope walker, the imagination of the guy which invented boardin'-house hash, and the optimism of a salesman startin' through Hades with a line of celluloid collars. He's got to be press agent, trainer, banker, adviser, valet, pal, and keeper for some bull-necked mauler, which nine and three-fifths times outa ten presents him with the raspberry the instant he graduates from the preliminaries.

Many a tenth-rate scrapper has copped fame and fortune through the efforts of a brainy pilot, and many a champ has lost both through the coarse work of a poor one. Again, they ain't a dozen cases on the books where a fighter tried to manage *himself* and was a success of it. One bright and shinin' example of this is Monsieur Jessica Willard, the martyr of Toledo, which might of lasted a few more seconds before the ferocious Dempsey if he'd had shrewd and experienced handlin' from his corner.

Popularity with the mob is what brings home the sugar in professional boxin' the same as in professional anything. Jim Coffey shook a mean controller on the front end of a New York street car before he seen a picture of Peter Maher and decided he was a sucker to work for a coupla bucks a day when he could put on half a bathin' suit, knock a lot of Englishmen cold, and get from one to five thousand berries for doin' it. Coffey was rechristened "the Fighting Irish Motorman," and every time he started against some set-up they had to call out the reserves to keep the motormen and conductors from tearin' the clubhouse down to see their ex-colleague perform. In a few months Coffey cleaned up a fortune. Frank Moran gets paid in thousands for his work because he can and usually does take a terrific lacin' with a wide grin on his face and a runnin' fire of wise cracks for the ringsiders. Al McCoy, when middleweight champ, was prob'ly the least popular fighter which ever wore a crown, yet he got large dough for his services because he jammed the clubhouse with thousands of fans which wildly hated him and come for the sole

purpose of seein' him knocked dead! I could name a hundred other scrappers which got a Big Time hearin' purely on a managerial-created personality.

Success is a high-powered drink which has flattened as many guys as booze ever did—you gotta know how to handle it or it'll throw you, as sure as the Atlantic is inclined to be damp! What keeps plenty of room for newcomers at the top of the ladder of fame is the fact that simple carelessness is continually forcin' guys that's reached there to slide off. In our case poor judgment and too much ambition caused us to drop back in the heap just when it looked like not even the champ could stop us.

This one-round knockout by Kennedy before a metropolitan jury ruined all my hard work in makin' Kid Roberts a drawin' card in the Big Town, and set us back at least a year—as I thought at the time. Here's a burg where you can get anything in the world with the slight exception of sympathy, where every guy which lands at the Battery with a dialect, a secretary, and four trunks is gave the freedom of the city and a chance to rent Carnegie Hall, whilst a possible future Carnegie, with nothin' but the dialect, is sent to Ellis Island so's he can appreciate what a democracy means at the go in.

The bank roll was shot to pieces, three or four important and exceedin'ly profitable bouts had been canceled, and takin' it by and large, our prospects looked as bright as a guy's which has just finished a course in bartendin'. There was only one way we could come back quick, and that was to get a return scrap with Kennedy and knock him dead, a thing that to my untutored mind looked 99 per cent impossible. In the first

place, the hardest fight in a box-fighter's career is his first quarrel after he's been knocked out. You generally pick nothin' but tramps for him all over again, gradually gettin' his confidence back—but to rush a green kid right in again against the baby that's flattened him is absolutely idiotic, nine times outa ten. If your boy's a champ, or you got a agreement with the other guy, it's different. I had neither a champ or a agreement.

So, as I looked across our room at the Kid pacin' up and down like the inmate of the panther's cage at the zoo, I decided it was us back to the bushes again for a space, battlin' bums and sellin' tickets for the battles on a commission in the lew of a guaranteed purse.

"Well, Kid," I says fin'ly, "drag out the old suit case and we'll vamp away for the sticks. We gotta start all over again, several feet below the bottom, and jab our way back to where we was when you fell into that wallop from Kennedy. It's tough, but—"

He swung around on me like a flash. "What do you mean?" he says. "I thought you had secured me a return bout with Al Kennedy?"

Pretty good for the Kid, hey? Wantin' to step right out again with the first guy which had knocked him for a goal. The boy had heart, what?

"I *had* matched you with Kennedy again," I says, "but said bout is all off now!"

"He crawled out of it, eh?" he snarls, bangin' his fist down on the bureau. "Robbed me of my chance to win back the—"

"No," I interrupts, "he didn't crawl out of it.

Nothin' would of gave Monsieur Kennedy greater delight than havin' you as his guest in the middle of a twenty-four-foot ring! *I'm* the baby that crabbed the thing, and it hurt me more than it does you, because we was to drag down six hundred fish for that mêlée, and the only way we can make six hundred dollars right now is to steal a counterfeitin' layout somewheres!"

"Then why the devil did you cancel that bout?" he roars, advancin' on me with a four-alarm fire in each eye. "Is this a crude preliminary to your tellin' me you're ready to quit me because I've been knocked out?"

The Kid was towerin' over me, his fine chin shoved out at a fightin' angle, and that bone-crushin' right dyin' with impatience to land on my jaw. I stood up, put my hands in my pockets and looked him over quietly.

"Listen!" I says. "I never quit anything or anybody in my life; that's why I'm broke—which shows the copy books is all wrong! I'll tell you why I called off your return quarrel with Al Kennedy, and if you laugh at me whilst I'm tellin' it I'll take a clout at you myself. It was maniacal on my part to listen to you before and send you in against a guy as tough as that, instead of waitin' till you had a few more *real* battles under your belt, and I been sore at myself for doin' it ever since. You and me was raised in different hothouses, Kid—the nearest *I* ever been to college was the time I went up to New Haven to go behind Young Evans when he fought K. O. Hinds. I passed

Yale on the ways to the clubhouse. So I know *your* idea of a box-fighter's manager is a guy which would frame his brother for a dollar-fifty, set fire to a orphan asylum just to be nasty, and rob a blind cripple for want of somethin' to do. Well, here's where the big laugh comes. Strange as it may seem, I *like* you, you big stiff, and I'm not gonna let you go in and get your head punched off, when I know you ain't got a chance of winnin', for a few dirty dollars! I need my bit of the six hundred men we was guaranteed to fight Kennedy the same as you do, but I ain't gonna take it for you gettin' beat up. We'll go broke together and battle our way back. *Now* if you wanna clout me, go to it!"

The Kid's face was a movie durin' the time I was talkin' and them big hands which was to make him a mint full of kopeks slowly fell at his sides. Then one of 'em shot up and grabbed mine till they must of heard me yell in Siberia.

"I'm all wrong!" he says with that flashin' kid grin of his. "It seems to me, old man, that I should prepare a lot of apologies and present them to you at once; it would save a lot of time. I think I'll rechristen you Gunga Din, for at times there appears to be no question but that you're a better man than I am!"

"Say, listen!" I says, tickled silly that the boy was himself again. "Lay off that Gunga Din stuff. I'm a manager, not a water-bucket holder!"

The Kid's grin widens. "Now that the airy persiflage has been disposed of," he says, grabbin' my hand again, "please believe that I value your friendship as much as I do your—er—managerial ability, and,

whatever my fortunes may be, I'll never forget either. I am thoroughly convinced now that you had my best interests at heart when you canceled that Kennedy return bout."

"That's fine!" I says, lettin' forth several sighs of relief. "And now that we got *that* all settled, we—"

"But," he goes on, "I'm afraid you'll have to wire for a new contract, because my next bout will be with Al Kennedy if I have to pick a quarrel with him in the street!"

I let out a yell and collapsed on the bed. This baby was past me!

"Yes," he continues coldly, sittin' on the arm of a chair and borin' me with them steel-gray eyes of his. "I'm going to fight Kennedy again before I meet anyone else, and I'm fit enough to step into the ring with him to-night. I will not go back! I've set a goal for myself, and I may be forced out of the game altogether, but I'll never return to beating up those poor, unfortunate brutes for a few dollars a fight. Those things are not boxing bouts; they're exhibitions of bestial brutality that would have warmed the cockles of Nero's heart! No more of them for me, and that's final! I'm going ahead, not backward, old man, and a win over Kennedy means a step forward—a bout with the next man higher up to the champion. If Kennedy whips me again, I'll quit the ring and try my hand at something else; but he's got to *whip* me first! You wire for a bout on any terms—I'll fight him for nothing if there's no other way. Why, the prestige of a victory over him would be worth it!"

Whilst I'm still in a trance he walks over and picks

up his hat, gives himself a swift dollin' up before the mirror, and turns to the door.

"I'm going down and get a magazine," he says. "I'll be back shortly. You'd better file that wire at once—or *I* will!"

"But look here, you boob!" I hollers, jumpin' up. "We have—"

"Get me Kennedy!" he snaps, and slams the door.

I sit there lookin' at said door for the worst part of five minutes. Then I reached in my pocket and pulled out a little billet-doux I had not showed Kid Roberts. It was a answer to my telegram cancelin' the fight with Kennedy, and the words and music went like this:

Will raise ante to $750 *no higher, six rounds Kennedy. Don't try to Jesse James us. Wire if O. K.*

ALBION A. C.

I must of read that novel over about forty times. Then I got up, swore what is frequently called a round oath, kicked over a innocent wastebasket, went to the phone, and wired the Albion A. C. approval to the assassination in cold blood of the whitest guy which ever rubbed a shoe in rosin—i. e., Kid Roberts!

Down in the lobby I found everybody in the world, with the slight exception of Kid Roberts. Over to a side was one of them classy tea rooms where you really gotta drink tea now, unless you're a old customer which has been a steady patron for a few hours at the least. It's jammed as the subway at 6 p. m., with ladies which is supposed to be havin' a tough day shoppin'; tired business men which trusts they ain't recognized, but if they are what of it; young girls which should be goin'

to school and *are,* but don't know it yet, and young guys which toils not neither do they spin, on account of bein' able to shake a nasty hoof. Everybody is dancin' hither and yon to the soft strains of a jazz band which would get throwed out of a boiler factory for makin' too much noise.

In the midst of the above, I discover Kid Roberts.

The boy is steppin' out with a Jane which the only thing I can tell about her from where I stand is that she's got black hair and a lot of it, but when the music had mercy and laid off and by dumb luck they come to a halt opposite me, I seen *that* was only one of the young lady's various charms. She's one of them medium height, curvin' knockouts which would prob'ly of made a bigger boob outa Marc Anthony than Cleo did, inside of five minutes. Also, she had a couple of eyes which would attract a crowd even if set in a scarfpin, and she had found out that they was more things could be done with 'em than merely gazin' straight ahead. Even though a experienced spectator could see her complexion come in a can, she had made a *beaucoup* job of it. But the expression in them starry orbs I spoke about reminded me of a boss poker player's when he's considerin' standin' a raise.

"Lookin' for me?" says the Kid pleasantly, seein' me.

"Yeh," I nods, givin' the young lady a brief glance.

"Pardon me, Miss Murray," he says, with a drawin'-room bow, "I won't be a moment, and then we'll finish our dance. Oh, let me introduce my friend, Mister—"

"Pleased t'meetcha!" butts in the charmin' young damsel, with what she no doubt thought was a killin'

smile. "Never mind the rest—I kin never remember names anyways. Do you dance?"

"I was a assistant at St. Vitus Academy for years," I says, with a bewitchin' grin.

"Oh, a kidder, hey?" she comes back. Then turnin' to the Kid: "Well go ahead and see what your friend wants—if you make it snappy, I'll wait."

The Kid bows again, I don't, and we start for the elevator.

"Do you expect to lick Kennedy by trainin' in a jazzery with a dame for a sparrin' partner?" I snarls, kinda sore. "What's the idea?"

He smiles. But it's a nervous grin—there seems to be somethin' on his mind.

"I was standing in the lobby," he tells me, "and I heard them playing a waltz in there. It was one of those soft, dreamy, Mendellsohny things that brought with it visions of Newport, Tuxedo, Aiken—oh, all that used to be. I went over merely to listen—to close my eyes and fancy myself again a— However, I met Mabel—eh—Miss Murray, quite unconventionally—delightfully so. I simply respectfully asked permission to dance with her, introducing myself, before I thought, as Kane Halliday. You see, I was carried away by the spell of my imaginings and forgot that I am temporarily Kid Roberts, a pugilist. Unfortunately the lady had no sooner granted my idiotic request when the orchestra swung into that infernal din—jazz, I believe they call it—and I, of course, had to go through with it."

"It didn't seem to be causin' you no pain when *I*

flashed you," I snorts. "Who the—who *is this* Mabel?"

"Miss Murray is in charge of the cigar counter," says the Kid. "She is a charming girl, all the more so for her naïve inconventionality. I like her immensely, and if you in any way intimate to her that I am a prize fighter, I think I shall murder you."

"Well," I remarks, "all I can say is that you are a pig for punishment with the regard to the ladies, Kid, and that's that! Go to it—this mere regular monthly romance of yours will only last a week or so at the most and then—"

"This girl is different!" snaps the Kid. "There's no pretense, no affectation about her. Her frankness—"

"Oh, all right, go ahead," I butts in, as we step outa the elevator. "As long as you don't claim she *understands* you and the etc., I guess it ain't fatal yet!"

As soon as we're in the room I breaks the glad tidin's: "I have got Kennedy again for you as per your instructions. We fight him six rounds or less in Philly, two weeks from to-morrow, for the modest stipend of $750, come what may. Now, Kid, you gotta train hard for this baby and—"

"I'm ready to step into the ring right now!" he cuts me off impatiently. "I'll start light training to-morrow —at present I need relaxation. Lord, that girl will think I've been kidnaped. Back in an hour!" and he's outa the door.

What could you do with a kid like that?

From then until the night we rolled up to the jammed and howlin' clubhouse in sweet old Philly, Kid Roberts and the fair Mabel was constant playfellows. By hang-

in' onto him like a cold in the head I had him train hard and faithfully every day, but in the evenin' by the moonlight and the etc. it was all different and all Mabel. Sweet Mamma, how he did fall for that Jane! She had him layin' down and rollin' over every time she snapped her fingers, and alongside of the flowers, candy, and dinners he bought her, the Follies chorus would think they was neglected. Every time a member of the less deadly sex purchased a cigar from Mabel's stand whilst the Kid was in the offin', Roberts glared at him like he was gonna bite him, and it fin'ly got so that the both of 'em was the talk of the lobby.

Still and all, I did not care for Mademoiselle Murray. To me she wasn't the Kid's kind. Let him be a pug for the time bein' or not, he was nevertheless Kane Halliday to me—a nice, big, clean kid. I freely admit that Mabel was a *très bien* looker and all that, but she was too wise for the boy, and I was afraid he wouldn't find that out until when he did it would hurt. I had gave him my word that I wouldn't tell her his present trade and that let *me* out, but it didn't prevent me from wishin' to Heavens that somethin' would bust up these bills and coos before they was nothin' left but the bills!

We had to practically clout our ways into the clubhouse and call on the assistance of the coppers to get to the dressin' room, where we found some Philly newspaper guys waitin' for us. I had let the fancy auto, valet, mask, and all the other bunk go by the board this time, because that was killed when Kennedy knocked the Kid out in one round the first time they

met. You gotta be new all the time in the fight game, the same as in anything else, to get more than a passin' glance from the mob. Now that it was known that Kid Roberts was really Kane Halliday, the once famous Yale football and etc. star, he was a bigger sensation than ever, and the sport writers was gathered around us to get a story about him for their papers.

After they have interviewed the Kid silly whilst he's gettin' into his workin' togs, one of these guys says to him:

"Kid, we're all with you and we wanna see you knock this guy for a goal, so I'm gonna slip you a few tips that may be useful when you're in there tryin'. Kennedy is as foul a fighter as ever heeled a man with his glove, and he likewise swings a nasty tongue in the clinches. He's got you figured for a set-up because he flattened you before and he's set to make a show out of you to-night. Keep your head and pay no attention to his sarcastic remarks—Just tie in and he'll wilt! But be careful, because this baby will try every trick known to the game."

"Yes?" butts in the Kid, lookin' up from the table where the handlers is massagin' him. "Well, watch *me!* I'll be so rough with Mister Kennedy that after to-night the sight of a boxing glove will make him ill for a month. For every trick he tries on me, I'll go him one better. This is one fellow I want to knock out and I'll lick him at his own game!"

Wow!

On the square, I could scarcely believe my own ears. I had never heard the Kid pull any stuff like this before since I'd had him. Usually he was as

nervous as a two-year-old at the post—pale, tremblin', and lickin' his lips till if you didn't know him you'd think he was yellah. Now he laid there grinnin' and kiddin' with the handlers, the most cool and collected guy in the clubhouse. All I was afraid of was that he was kiddin' *himself* with this stuff and might collapse on me or somethin' when I got him into the ring—I seen that happen many's the time before with other guys. But—well, wait!

When we pushed and milled down the aisle to the ring it seemed to me that, if all the guys which was packed in there had voted against prohibition, it would be a felony to-day to call for a glass of *water!* They had a rule against smokin', and as a result the smoke was so thick we got all the sensations of a fireman on that brief trip to the battle ground. Kennedy and his handlers had already started down from the opposite direction, and the yell which went up from them lunatics all around us was just one continuous roar, in which it was impossible to pick out any words—nothin' but plain sound, that's all. This here demonstration was neither for Roberts or Kennedy, particularly. It was caused by the same thing which makes the lions in the zoo beller when the keepers start in with the meat.

There was little time wasted in stallin' around, and five minutes after the men entered the ring they was standin' together in the center, gettin' their instructions. Then come the first real thrill—for *me,* anyways!

When the referee gets through with his monologue about not hittin' on the breakaways, and the like,

Kennedy reaches over suddenly and grabs Kid Roberts by the wrist, jerkin' the arm down hard. A old stunt of gettin' a fighter's goat, right on the verge of the openin' bell.

"I'll make you yell for the cops, you bum!" he snarls. "I knocked you in a round before—well, tonight I'm gonna make you stay and like it. I'll cut you to pieces, you pink-cheeked quitter!"

Quick as a flash, the Kid shoots up his left hand, and with the heel of the glove rubs Kennedy's hair all over his bullet head, mussin' it up.

"Shut up, you big stiff!" he comes back. "When they cart you away from here in a couple of minutes, you'll have to go back driving a truck!"

Sweet Papa—I could of kissed him!

Kennedy jumped back with a surprised grunt, and the amazed referee pushes 'em apart. The crowd, seenin' this unusual byplay, rocked the buildin', and the din was so terrible I don't believe six guys heard the bell.

Kennedy come out with a rush, and the Kid brought him up short with a beautiful left uppercut that almost tore his head off. They mixed like a coupla wildcats in the middle of the ring, neither havin' a advantage and both fightin' at a pace that meant curtains in short order for somebody. The referee split 'em up, and on the break Kennedy swung a vicious right that missed by inches, for which he was warned by the referee and hissed by the howlin' mob. The Kid grinned and put a left and right to the head, but a instant later Kennedy staggered him with a wicked chop to the jaw and a overhand right to the face that

opened up a old cut under the Kid's eye. The gore blinded him, and Kennedy roughed him to the ropes, workin' both hands to the body and face like a madman. It looked bad for the Kid, and the crowd went hysterical when Roberts suddenly straightened up and drove Kennedy back on his heels with two short chops to the jaw and a right and left uppercut to the same place. Kennedy looked scared and begin to tin-can around the ring with the Kid chasin' him and tryin' desperately to polish him off. He fin'ly pinned him in a neutral corner and they stood toe to toe and slugged till they wasn't a guy in the clubhouse with any voice or sense left. It was a cinch *one* of 'em must flop, and Kennedy was the first one to go. He pitched forward on his face, took a count of "nine," and come up a sorry-lookin' sight. One eye was closed, and the rest of his face was a crimson blur. He tried to dive into a clinch, but the Kid shook him off and sprawled him in a heap with a terrific right to the jaw. The referee had reached "eight" without a flicker of a muscle from Kennedy, when the bell rung.

Kid Roberts skipped to his corner grinnin' like a schoolboy on Xmas mornin' and wavin' a glove at the frenzied crowd. Outside of the cut under one eye, which I paid a lot of attention to durin' the rest, there wasn't a mark on him.

"I've got him!" he pants, whilst I'm dousin' him with water. "He'll never last out the next round!"

"Shut up, don't talk!" I growls. "Save your wind. They ain't never out till they're counted out!"

Kennedy was slow in gettin' off his stool for the

second frame and the Kid met him before he was out of his own corner with a smash under the heart that hung him over the ropes, where he covered up and waited for it. But the Kid stepped away, payin' no attention to the groans of the mob, and Kennedy suddenly jabbed his left to the face, fallin' in and clinchin' with the punch. I couldn't figure the move till I seen his knee come up with a jerk and then I shrieked—but it was too late. That big stiff's bony kneecap caught the Kid in the pit of the stomach, and Roberts slid slowly to the floor, gaspin', his face twisted in the agony of the lowest foul known to the prize ring. That, of course, was Kennedy's game—to cripple the boy. He'd had enough, and he wanted to lose on a foul rather than be knocked out. He'd made no attempt to conceal the thing, which was plain to every one of the wildly yelpin' customers. The referee waved Kennedy to his corner, and me and my merry men jumped into the ring and ran to the Kid, which was now sittin' up and bitin' his lips till they was a thin red stream tricklin' down his drawn face, but the look in his eyes, fastened on Kennedy, was terrible to see. We helped him up and started to half carry him to his corner, but he pushed us away and braced himself against the ropes, seemin'ly gettin' stronger every second. That kid's vitality was remarkable! The referee held up his hand and gradually the noise died down.

"Gentlemen!" he says, "I award this bout to Kid Roberts on a foul and—"

The rest was lost in the uproar, but the Kid grabs the referee's arm. "Don't award me anything," he

gasps. "I want to knock that dog out. Let the fight go on—I'm all right!"

The referee's eyes come near partin' forever with his head.

"You're crazy, son!" he grunts. Then, turnin' to me: "Hey, you better look after your man. Is there a doctor in—"

Kid Roberts breaks away from him and walks to the center of the ring, holdin' up both hands and like magic the yells dies away again.

"Gentlemen," says the Kid, slowly and painfully, "you came here to witness a boxing exhibition, and unfortunately it has been interrupted. I am perfectly willing and able to continue, and that's what I want to do! The referee says I've been fouled—that's correct. But I'm not badly hurt and if *I'm* willing to take a chance, why shouldn't *he?*"

Sweet Mamma—you should of heard them babies out in front *then!*

So many things come off in such sensationally quick succession after that that it's hard to get 'em in order. I tried to drag the Kid to his corner and got shoved halfway through the ropes. The mob surged back and forth yellin' for the fight to go on, and in Kennedy's corner they took up the shout. *They* was only too anxious now. Their man had got a rest, and the Kid was plainly all in. Here was a chance to turn defeat into a certain knockout for Kennedy. The referee hesitated, looked out at the crowd, shook his head, and fin'ly threw up his hands and walked to the ropes. Somebody rung the bell, and, like a flash, Kennedy was off his stool, plungin' at the Kid, which

turned to meet him with a twisted grin. The referee hollered and started between 'em, caught the growl of ten thousand animals, shrugged his shoulders, and stepped away. And then they were at it again like wild men!

A fight, what?

The first solid wallop the Kid landed showed Kennedy what a simp he was to think Roberts was the same as out. It broke his nose and made him a study in red from chin to hips. He began back-pedalin' again, but the Kid gave him no chance. He punched him from pillar to post, from one side of the ring to the other. He hit him with every blow known to boxin', and inside of a minute had him flounderin' blindly about the ring, drunk with punishment. A hurricane of left and right hooks almost knocked Kennedy through the ropes, and swish—a sponge came hurtlin' into the ring from his corner. It rolled to the edge of the platform, quivered there a minute, and then the blazin'-eyed referee with a flick of his heel sent it spinnin' down on the reporters.

"Fight, you yellah bum!" he roars in Kennedy's battered ear. "You wanted it; now *take* it!"

Kennedy, seein' they was no way out of it, staggered forward and swung wildly with both hands. The Kid laughed out loud, measured him with his left, and floored him with a right cross to the button of the jaw. Kennedy, glassy-eyed, rolled over on his back at "six," gazed up at the Kid he had tried to maim for life a few minutes back, and waved a weak hand.

"I—got—enough!" he pants and quit like a dog!

Then, with a happy smile on his lips, Kid Roberts slid through my arms to the canvas in a dead faint.

It was three or four days after we got back to New York again before I had the pleasure of viewin' Miss Mabel Murray, the fascinatin' cigar seller. I went over to the stand to buy a paper, and she presented me with a killin' smile, callin' me up to her end of the counter with a charmin'ly intimate nod. "Say!" she says. "That bird Halliday must of figured I just got shipped in here from Hensfoot Corners or somethin', didn't he?"

"Why?" I says, with the greatest of interest.

"Well," she says, confidentially, "I'll tell you. Y'know, if I *do* say it myself, there's worse lookers than me, and I gotta stand for a lotta kiddin' durin' the hours I put in here every day sellin' these here Roperinos to the male's sex. I get four-flushed to death from 8 a. m. to 5 p. m. daily except Sunday, by everything from travelin' salesmen to risin' young bill clerks, which can't control their generosity and crave my company at lunch and so forth. Accordin' to *them,* they're all millionaires' sons in disguise or black sheeps of grand old families, and none of 'em makes less than $5,000 a week, not countin' tips. Of course all this goes in one ear and out another with me, but I thought this Halliday was *different.* He's such a good looker, his manners would make a head waiter look like a stevedore, and his *language*—well, half the time I didn't even know what he was talkin' about! I admit I was on the verge of fallin' for him— Mother mine, how he can dance! But I found out yesterday I'd been bunked again."

"I don't make you, kid," I says. "What did the boy do?"

She leans over and grins.

"Say," she says. "It's a scream! He comes over here very serious and says he's got somethin' important to tell me—somethin' I gotta know before our friendship can go any farther, get me? Of course I had him pegged from the go in for what he *is*—one of them tea-room boys which will stop at nothin' but work! Naturally, I figured he was about to make a touch. What d'ye think he told me?"

"Shoot!" I says. "I never win a guess in my life."

She leans back and busts right out laughin'.

"He claims he's Kid Roberts, the prize fighter," she chortles. "That bird a *fighter!* Say, if anybody ever threatened to wallop *him,* he'd pass away in a swoon! How is it that none of you guys can ever tell a woman the truth?"

ROUND FIVE

THE TAMING OF THE SHREWD

ONE of the unusually interestin' courses at *my* college, viz., the University of Experience, is the study of laughter—prob'ly the most abused and powerful single agent for good or bad in the world. They's no doubt that many's the delicate situation has been saved by a well-placed giggle, but far more cases has been shot to pieces by a poorly timed one. A good-natured laugh for the example, has frequently been known to prevent murder, but, on the other hand, billions of guys has been bumped off for no more cause than a single, sneerin' grin. The chuckle is the boob's natural defense and the wise guy's offense, and it's a *beaucoup* dangerous weapon either way!

But, in mass formation, the humble titter stands alone as a maker or breaker of men! The laugh of the mob has kept Chaplin away from the almshouse and Bryan away from the White House. They guffawed Henry Ford into a fortune and Doc Cook out of one. The Wright brothers was showered with snickers, but they fin'ly made the world fly and the Anti-Saloon League, a long-standin' object of mirth, is fin'ly makin' it dry.

So ridicule is roast duck to some guys and carbolic

to others. It's stung thousands of losers into gettin' across and thousands of winners into gettin' the raspberry. I could undoubtlessly trot out a hundred cases of both, but a glance at the daily papers will supply you with much fresher lists than I got. However, boys and girls, if you'll keep your lustrous eyes glued to the followin' pages for a few minutes, I will give you a sensational example of how the jeerin' chortle of a mob queered one of the most shrewdly crooked schemes I ever was framed for, whilst as a box-fight impresario I was endeavorin' to make Kid Roberts reignin' king of the Leather Pushers. After the Kennedy muss, I took the Kid for a dash around the usual heavyweight circuit from Harlem to Frisco, takin' on all comers and always bellerin' for a muss with the champ. The Kid made Annette Kellermanns out of the bulk of his men, and the high divin' which was had on that trip would of caused the extremely fair Ann to give up the swimmin' game in disgust!

Out of twelve guys he went versus with, six of 'em succumbed to the sleepin' sickness in from one to three rounds, three lasted less than a minute, two scraps was stopped to save the Kid from a manslaughter charge; and one bird stayed ten frames and was presented with a draw by a referee which had to be gave aid and succor by the cops immediately after he whispered his decision to the stupefied crowd. The gent which went the limit with the Kid was called Tiger Capato. As they remarked when Roosevelt was a infant, you'll hear more about that guy later.

As we stood to date, we'd had sixteen quarrels and win fourteen by knockouts, and if that ain't a record

to get chesty about, then neither was Napoleon's! Also, we'd gathered together numerous shekels and our guarantees now run from $3,000 to $7,000 a fight, accordin' to where it was and with which. Seven thousand berries is interestin' money even to Charley Schwab, and *I* was satisfied to leave well enough alone and go right back over the trail bouncin' them same babies once more for auld lang sang and, of course, the pennies. But, brother, it was all different with my food card, Kid Roberts. That boy was as full of ambition as Pancho Villa and he wanted the champion now or nobody! He still hated the box-fight game from pit to dome and had swore on several phone books that the minute he win the title and copped one large, juicy purse, he'd leave the ring flat on its back and go in some business. A business, for the example, where, if anybody kept wavin' a dirty towel up and down in front of him, he would at the least have the pleasure of throwin' him out of his office, instead of havin' to sit on a backless stool and like it, as he did now!

How the soever, the champ turned a bevy of deaf ears to our frenzied demands for a crack at his crown and we might as well of tried to pick a fight with a nervous rabbit. In the two years he'd held the title, this cuckoo had fought exactly 901 guys—one set-up which lasted four rounds and 900 movie supers which lasted four reels. He was out on the goldiest gold coast of America, or, to get technical, Los Angeles, Calipickford, makin' a picture labeled "Up from the Gutter and Half Ways Back" or "From Dockhand to Champion!" The screen slave driver

had him sewed up for several months on a chilled-steel contract callin' for a couple of hours' work every sunshiny day at a niggardly pittance of $60,000 cash and 10 per cent of the loot from the film. Likewise he was allowed to wear white flannel pants and make up his eyebrows in the last reel, and the Jane which took off the part of the innocent little damsel he rescued from the Home for Wayward Girls, or the like, was a second Diana.

Now did that bird want to hurl all this overboard, go into heavy trainin' for a coupla months and then get roughed and jostled all over a ring by my young bone crusher? Sweet Spirits of Niter—NO!!

But the indignant sport writers come to our assistance and without no preliminary warnin' opened up with their heavy guns on the peacefully inclined heavyweight champion of our present world. All the ways across Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean, them guys begin runnin' pictures of Kid Roberts with his amazin' casualty list alongside of 'em—then they took their typewriters in hand and let the keys run wild!

In the first place, Kid Roberts was always what is known as "good copy" in the newspaper game. Just gaze over the layout again; it'll only take a second. Here was a ex-famous college star who'd entered the prize ring to put his bankrupt father on his feet, who against all the dope was knockin' everybody dead, whose heiress had gave him the gate on the strength of it and who'd fin'ly punched his way to a chance at the world's championship. There we have as much romance, human interest, thrill, and suspense as they was in the French Revolution, as some bird wrote after

samplin' one of them new antidotes for prohibition. Was a guy which had did all *that* to be kept from the happy endin'? Far be it from such!

So the young men went at the thing with a will, printin' the actor-champ's somewhat mild record opposite the Kid's and demandin' that he leave the bathin' beauties be and defend his title like a gent and a scholar, or else resign and concede it to the Kid. Half a million bucks wouldn't of bought the publicity we was gettin' every day, and it didn't cost me a pleasant smile. The big, handsome Kid's personality, the air of class his blood and college had gave him, and his willin'ness to fight anybody but the battleship Pennsylvania, put 'em in back of him to a man. They's no squarer shooter or better sport on the earth than your average newspaper guy. Likewise I discovered a long ways back that he's a great guy to have in your corner and a tough one to have off of you. Show him you got the merchandise and he'll drop everything to help you deliver it, but try and slip one over on him and Sweet Mamma—he shakes a nasty ink!

The champ simply grinned at this newspaper barrage, but the guys which had sank their sugar in his movie didn't! Contrary to the layman's opinion, they is several ounces of brains invested in the films, and these birds seen immediately that, unless their boxer star come out of his hole and made a noise like a scrapper, his ten-reeler was due to be a terrible bust. Already advance announcements of it was beginnin' to draw some scattered hisses hithers and yon, and the panic was on!

It's unfortunately true that our dear old hard-workin' U. S. likes to relax every now and then and gets hysterical over them foreign whatnots which comes here to grab off some *real* dough for a change and then goes back and roasts us to a fare-thee-well. But in spite of this slight weakness, we are far from a nation of come-ons, as many of them patronizin' tourists discovered, after the first wild cheers had died out. We don't care how much we *spend* for our toys, but we *do* wanna see 'em go! We insist that our plumbers plumb, our bankers bank, our actors act, and our fighters fight. We allow no guy to stall unless he gets sentenced to Congress—the only cruel and unusual punishment now legal under our punch-drunk Constitution!

Well, after a conference with his manager, press agents, and photoplay magnates, the champ presented the press with a statement in which he claimed he'd be willin' to listen to us on the subject of fisticuffs the minute he laid off elevatin' the screen, or, in the other words, three months. In the mean's while, we wouldst have to dispose of the Hon. Tiger Capato, the only heavy in captivity which Kid Roberts had been unable to make kiss the canvas and recline thereon till the referee had pronounced him dead.

The Kid almost wept for joy when the news reached him that he was gonna get a crack at the world's championship. He tore into our bower at the big-league hotel we was stablin' at now, wavin' a bunch of evenin' papers and grinnin' like a second Fairbanks.

"Six months from now I'll be champion!" he yells, with a slap on my back that loosened four buttons on

the front of my vest. "Then one scrap for a couple of hundred thousand and I'm through! I'll throw my title to the pack and let 'em fight it, while I'll—"

"Whilst you'll blow *your* end of the gate, go broke and come back to the hit-and-run game again!" I butts in. "Listen, young feller, don't feed *me* none of that desertin'-the-ring-stuff—I was engaged in the gift of pilotin' pugs when *you* thought a uppercut was a euchre term. Once the heavy money, the thrill of landin' a perfectly timed right cross, the screamin' mob, the bein' constantly in the public's eye, and all the rest of it gets into your arteries, you can't throw it off like a old coat—and that's *that!* No, sir, son; right up to the time the embalmer says: 'Well, I guess I'll finish this one and then go home!' you'll be tellin' your fellow ghosts that you could of licked the current crop of heavies in the same ring if you hadn't bumped off. Ever hear of a ex-champ that didn't try to stage a comeback, regardless of age or condition? Take a squint at the books—John L., Corbett, Fitzsimmons, Jeff, Bat Nelson, Abe Attell, Young Corbett, Lavigne, McGovern, Gans, Ritchie, Wolgast, Coulon, Papke, and the etc. All of *them* boys was champs amongst *champs* and all of 'em was tryin' to crawl out of the pugilistic ash heap back to the calcium for years after they'd been nothin' but a faint memory to the mob!"

"Just a second!" flings the Kid over his shoulder, rippin' off his collar and draggin' out the shavin' apparatus. "There's no comparison between myself and those men, either in boxing ability or—well, let's call it temperament. Without exception, all those fellows you rattled off were *born* fighters—it was

in the blood! They fought for money, of course, but it was principally the sheer love of battle that drove them to crawl through the ropes to kill or get killed, long after their star had set. I am *not* a born pugilist. I say that without any intent to sneer at what might have been a great game if it could have been kept clean! But it is a genealogical fact that I was born and reared in an entirely different atmosphere. I have no love for professional boxing, and I'm simply using it as a means to an end."

I sit and watched this big blond shavin' for a minute, feastin' my trained orbs on the easy play of ripplin' muscle over them white shoulders which loomed up out of his summer lingerie. A fighter? Say—they was *champion* wrote all over him, from the heel of his shoe to the roof of his dome! The only thing which spoiled the general effect was his intelligent look.

"I wouldst fain differ with thee, Big Guy," I grins, after a while, "on the subject of you not bein' born no fighter and likewise how ill in the abdomen the box-fightin' game makes you. I admit that, from the nursery up to a recent date, you was more used to afternoon tea parties than twenty-four-foot rings and that in your first few brawls you liked to cried your eyes out every time you knocked some bimbo for a goal. But a great change has come to the pass, Kid, and whether *you* noticed it or not, I don't know, but *I* did, because I'm gettin' paid to notice *everything* which is in the slightest way connected with you—get me? I only wish I had a photo to show

you of your last coupla quarrels. I'd particularly crave one of the fight with Soldier Gorman at St. Paul—a picture of our meek little college boy gettin' floored in Round One, tearin' out of my arms for Round Two, standin' toe to toe with this near gorilla Gorman, which stood up to it to the extent of fracturin' one of your ribs before he went out cold, whilst teacher's pet, which hates to strike anybody, crouched over him pantin', bloody and snarlin', till I had to drag him back to his little corner! *You* sick of the game? Kid, prize fightin' is your dish, and a flash at your face when you get hurt tells *that* part of it to the world!"

He suddenly quit shavin' and swung around on me, with the razor still poised in the air and his face flamin' as red as a oil-well fire where it wasn't lathered. Then that give way to a worried look, as he leaned back against the bureau and laid down the razor.

"Gad!" he says. "Is that a fact? I seem to enjoy this beastly business?"

"Oh, easily that!" I chuckles. "You have took to pushin' leather like Theda Bara took to a camera. And another thing, Kid, you have become one tough baby—praise be Allah! When you're in there tryin' *these* days, the way you go about your job would make the wildest guy in Borneo swoon away with pure fright!"

Hidin' behind another blush, the Kid give vent to a disgusted little shiver, looks at me kinda funny, and then takes a long view of himself in the mirror, like's he's mullin' over in his mind what I have just told him.

Fin'ly he lets forth a sigh, picks up the razor, and continues on with the shavin'.

"So I'm degenerating into a beast, eh?" he says half to himself whilst he scrapes away viciously. "Well, I'm glad you called my attention to that—though it would be strange indeed if the vapor of sordid, bestial atmosphere surrounding my present—eh—profession, did not slightly tarnish the highly sensitive polish of some generations of refinement. I suppose," he adds, with a short laugh, "when I get out of this infernal game I'll have to spend some time in a finishing school before I'll trust myself to enter a drawing room!"

Slappin' on the bay rum, he was grinnin' again like the kid he was.

"Now about this Tiger Capato, the fellow I have to whip before I meet"—his voice shook a bit with pure, undiluted joy—"before I meet the champion. Are you getting in touch with him?"

For answer I pointed to the bed, which was cluttered with telegrams from every fight club in North America, with the possible exception of the Mexican Senate. We went over 'em together and fin'ly decided the best offer come from New Orleans, the fracas to be held there within a month and to be a fifteen-round rough-house to a referee's decision. That last item give me a giggle. In fifteen rounds Kid Roberts could of licked 850 Tiger Capatos and, as for the decision thing, all we craved was a guy which could count up to "ten" in a loud and melodious voice!

The vulgar financial details of the bout was a

$25,000 purse to be split 60-40 and the wire also says that the matchmaker of the club, with Tiger Capato's manager, will meet me at the Claridge in a couple of days, to post appearance forfeits, sign articles, and the like.

I went down to the Claridge, as advertised, and asked for the matchmaker, bein' immediately escorted to a deadfall on the third floor. I just missed qualifying for the morgue when the door is opened by no less than the only enemy Kid Roberts had in the wide, wide world, to wit, Dummy Carney!

The way that baby kept on top of us from the time he first laid a eye on Roberts and started him pushin' leather, till the Kid made his pile and quit, was somethin' remarkable! Dummy couldn't forgive himself for lettin' the Kid get away from him, and he swore he'd never stop tryin' till a scrapper from his stable knocked my infant prodigy cold. Now he stood there with a twisted smile on his thick lips and them beady eyes of his enjoyin' my amazement to the last inch.

Before I can let out a bleat, he grabs me by the arm and yanks me into the room.

"Where's the Kid?" he whispers hoarsely, lookin' around.

"Doin' some road work," I says, still up to my ears in astonishment. "What are *you* doin' here? Where's Capato's manager and—"

Dummy closes the door and grins. "He's here," he says. "Sit down and take a load off your feet."

"Look here, Dummy," I says, facin' him. "This here's got a wrong look to *me!* I come here to sign articles with Capato's manager, not to—"

Once again he cuts me off, this time handin' me a cigar. "I'm Capato's manager!" he says coolly.

The cigar tumbled out of my hands on the floor and Dummy sit down and laughed out loud.

"Somethin' of a surprise party, hey?" he sneers. "Well, what's wrong about me buyin' Capato from Eddie Rainey—which is what I done?" He reaches in his pocket and flips me a paper. "There's the contract," he says. "As legal as snowballin' in Iceland. I told you I'd get me a boy which would bounce that cuckoo of yours—and I *got* him!"

Feelin' more at ease, I laid the contract on a table and took up the sport of grinnin' myself.

"Stop makin' me laugh!" I remarks. "Where's the matchmaker for the New Orleans abbattoir that's gonna stage the slaughter of your tramp?"

"Ah-heh!" coughs Dummy, knockin' the ash off his cigar. "Eh—*I'm* the matchmaker!"

Sweet Mamma!

"You're one terrible busy guy, ain't you?" I sneers, reachin' for my hat and gettin' up. "Well you got nothin' on *me*—so am I! The next time you wanna frame somebody, Dummy, get further out in the suburbs. I was pullin' off *them* kinda fights before you had wore out your first rattle. This here's gonna make a swell story for the sport writers to tie into—so long!"

"Sit down and don't be no stupider than you can help!" he snarls. "Did I ever strike you as bein' a hick? I got a business proposition to make you, durin' which time we'll forget our wild love for each other and let bygones be bygones. It's about the last chance we'll get to clean up, no matter if Capato knocks Kid Roberts

dead, or vice and versa. The way I look at it, there's fifty thousand for us to split, besides the crack *one* of us will get at the title. D'ye wanna listen?"

Well, I never claimed to be perfect!

A hour or so later I was on the en route back to my inn, buried in what is known as thought. They was nothin' new in Dummy's "business proposition"—it's bein' pulled off every day and *will* be pulled off as long as the boob birth rate continues to run sixty to the hour. Unless the admirers of boxin' as a *sport* go over it with a vacuum cleaner toot sweet and get rid of all the Dummy Carney's which is killin' the game wherever they sit in it, prize fightin' is due to get the raspberry over here as sure as they's a snowflake at the North Pole!

Here was Dummy's layout:

Kid Roberts and Tiger Capato which had already fought one level draw, was to pull off another one in this New Orleans burlesque. Whilst the hippodrome lasted it would be a wow of a scrap—knockdowns, sarcastic conversations, nasty glances, and even a little gore would be squandered if necessary, but, come what may, it was to be a "draw." Everybody, includin' the referee, would see to *that part* of it! Me and Dummy was to meet by "accident" in the sportin' editor's office of the biggest New Orleans paper before the thing and give that unsuspectin' young gent ten thousand berries apiece to hold, each bettin' that his man would cop by a knockout. This would help murder suspicion, besides gettin' the fight plenty of advertisin'. Twenty thousand bucks may not *sound* like so much, but laid down on the

table before you in fifty-dollar bills it *looks* like about twenty million. After the boys had "fought" their draw we'd both get back our sugar, of course, and the Kid and Capato was to be present when we collected. The Kid would then make some crack about bein' robbed of the decision and Capato would immediately make a pass at him. Then—wam! They'd both start mixin' it up, and have to be jimmied apart—all this, remember, before the delighted eyes of the sportin' editor. Would that little horseplay smoke up the return bout? Well, what do *you* think?

On the strength of the above drama the boys would be rematched then and there for a twenty-round open-air bout durin' the Mardy Grass week a month later. The town would be loaded with free-spendin' tourists, and the promoters figured on a fifty-thousand-berry gate if they got the breaks on the weather. *This* time it would be a up-and-up fight, and may the worst man lose!

Boiled down, the whole proposition was simply the time-worn scheme of drawin' two big crowds instead of one, the fact that the fans which paid their jack to see a *fight* in the first mill would be gypped not enterin' into the thing at all. New Orleans happened to be Capato's home town, and, as he had knocked a horde of tramps dead down there, he was a heavy local favorite. The prestige he'd gain by holdin' his own for fifteen rounds with the sensational Kid Roberts would boost Capato 100 per cent as a drawin' card, and even if the Kid knocked him kickin' in the second and *real* fight, he'd still hold most of his followin', who'd point to the showin' of the native son in the first argument and call

his defeat in the second a fluke. As I remarked before, there was nothin' new about this public-be-damned burglary; it's bein' done day in day out by such managers and such promoters as would frame their brothers for $1.50—and are doin' their best to send professional boxin' after the late Jack Barleycorn.

Before some enraged promoter, manager, or the etc. can jump up and holler that I am not above takin' liberties with the truth, I will mention the case of a well-known Philadelphia lightweight which a short time ago caused a mild sensation by his quick knockouts of all and sundry which could be lured into the ring with him at his home town. This baby has a local followin' which would make Harding think he was a man without friends, and I can recall no better example of the facts I have set forth above than this same native son. So remarkable was this kid's record that out-of-town sport writers, which had only seen him fight by the via of a telegram from his manager after each of his sensational wins, begin mentionin' him as the logical guy to remove the crown from the lightweight champion.

Then his manager, carried away by the reputation he himself had built up for his meal ticket, matched him with a tough kid from New York—a case-hardened veteran which asked no favors and had stood off the best of 'em. They all looked alike to this boy. It made no difference to him as long as he got his pennies for goin' in and takin' it, or vice and versa. He'd heard all about this Philly marvel with the man-killin' kick in each hand, and it bothered him the same way they worry over the income tax in the almshouse. It took the experienced campaigner about four seconds flat to

size up the other bird as a overrated false alarm, and, havin' got that all settled, he panicked the crowd by dumpin' the native son on his ear with the first wallop he tried. Accordin' to newspaper reports, whilst the dumfounded referee (also local talent) was gaspin' forth the count over the flattened gladiator, his hysterical handlers showered him with water—which violation of such rules as the game has brung him to life in time to stall out the round. Now, of course, the water-throwin' thing should have immediately disqualified that baby, and the other kid's manager hollered murder over the foul. He afterward claimed he was waved away and told if his boy didn't go on with the fight he wouldn't get a nickel. In that way the local drawin' card was saved from a one-round knockout which would of cut in half his value to the Philly fight promoters.

Followin' this accident, the Quaker City star went back to knockin' over fourth-rate set-ups as of yore. One night a Philadelphia city official dropped in at the fight club where this boy wonder was astoundin' the natives with his ability to push leather. Again the accounts state that five minutes after the official had shoved his way through the shriekin' mob to the ringside, the "bout" was stopped. Bein' somethin' of a sportsman, this guy had become sickened by the sight of the local marvel deliberately cuttin' up the helpless, frightened, and bleedin' young novice which had been selected for the slaughter by the careful club management. After stoppin' the manslaughter the official walked over to the headliner's corner and warned his manager in anything but drawin'-room terms that un-

less his boy was more evenly matched in the future he would not let him fight again in Philly.

These two examples, which is a matter of record, show how the local favorite is built up and protected as a drawin' card by a great many fight clubs whose coarse work is responsible for most of the agitation against boxin'.

Although I knew what the Kid's answer would be, I laid Dummy's proposition before him immediately. I wound up by carelessly remarkin' that the extry ducats which was in it for us might be a swell present for his dear old father, and that as far as I was concerned he could use his own judgment about the thing. He give forth a gasp when I told him his old friend Dummy was now handlin' Tiger Capato, but he didn't leap up and shriek for Dummy's gore like I half expected he would when he heard the rest of it. He just come over and patted me on the back with a chuckle.

"Nothing doing, old man!" he says. "Which, of course, is what I know you told that thug. We've somehow managed to escape the stigma of crookedness so far, and we'll go through clean to the finish! I'm going to put Capato away with a punch, if I can, but if he whips me I'll be the first to congratulate him. I realize I've got a big job on my hands this time—this Capato is the fastest man I've faced to date, and he can *hit,* in spite of what you say to the contrary. That clip I got on the jaw in the first round of our previous bout had me dazed for a couple of rounds afterward!"

"Aw, forget it!" I growls. "You was away off form that night—that's all. But I'd like to hand Dummy somethin' myself. Suppose I let him think we're goin'

through with this proposition, and then the chances is that this false alarm of his will come in hog fat and out of condition—make me? He'll think the thing is framed and get careless and—"

The Kid shook his head.

"No—we can't do that either!" he says, shuttin' me off. "That's all wrong too. It would mean a step down to Carney's level—a first step that might lead us through the whole vile labyrinth before we could stop. No, this bout will be absolutely square, regardless of the outcome. You had better warn Carney to have his man fit, because, win or lose, Capato will know he has been in a fight, I promise you!"

"But look here, Kid," I says impatiently, "that honest-as-the-day-is-long stuff is O. K. in copy books and the like, but this here's a game where a guy has got to use his *head* as well as his hands! There's angles to it that you'll prob'ly *never* get, and, with what *we* got at stake, we'd be a coupla fine bimbos if we didn't grab every advantage. Another thing, don't you suppose that Dummy Carney is figurin' on crossin' us? D'ye think *I* fell for that *draw* thing? That crook's got a coupla aces he ain't played yet, and we got a right to protect ourselves, ain't we?"

The Kid grins and holds up his hands.

"Here's plenty of protection!" he says. "Now let's go to a show and forget about Dummy and his fellow banditti. We'll enter no agreements with him or anyone else. My self-respect is about all I've managed to hold on to, and I wouldn't sacrifice *that* for the championship itself!"

Can you beat them college guys? Now you can get

a idea of how valuable a manager is to one of them babes in arms, hey?

I went to look for Dummy to break the bad news to him, and found he had wafted himself away to New Orleans to get things under way for the brawl; but whilst threadin' through Times Square I bump into no less than Jack Easton, the *champion's* manager. Jacques had unquestionably excavated a joint where they thought the Eighteenth Amendment was a vaudeville act, and he was lit up like Broadway at eight in the p. m. From the welcome he gimme I could of been his father. After we have exchanged the usual lies about how we are makin' out, Jack won't have it no other way but that I step around to his oasis and knock over a powder with him, and I—well, you know how weak the average man is! Besides, I figured here was a good chance to get some inside dope on the champ's condition and the etc. So we duck around the corner to this den of iniquity, and after we have sneaked a couple past our pleasantly surprised tonsils, Jack gets exceedin'ly talkative.

"C'mon!" he says, weavin' back and forth in front of me. "Lesh lap up large quantities of hooch! I'm looser'en a pail of ashes to-day—gonna sign a seventy-five-thousan'—'scuse me—movie contract for the Big Feller in the mornin'."

"Well, Jack, go to it," I says. "You better take them movie guys whilst the takin' is good, because next year *I'll* be handlin' a champion!"

"Humph!" he mutters. "*You're* gonna han'le—gonna han'le shamp, heh? Stop kiddin' yourself, stop kiddin'—'scuse me, mush have caught the hecups from

that—that bartender there. What was I tryin' to say? Oh, Kid Robersh. Well, say, they's as mush chance Kid Robersh bein' shampeen as they ish of me becomin' total 'stainer! Howsh Kid Robersh gonna be shamp if he don't never under no circumstances get a chance at the title? Ansher me that, heh?"

I commenced to smell large quantities of rats in this drunken talk, especially after Dummy Carney's proposition, so I quietly lead Monsieur Jack Easton into the back room and sit down at a table with him. When I left him sprawled out there, gettin' the bartender nervous with his snores some time later, I was on the verge of hydrophobia, and I think if Dummy Carney had come along then I would of took a chance and croaked him for luck!

It set me back seven rounds of drinks, or, in the other words, $14, to find out that Dummy had framed me and the Kid like Delia framed Samson. There wasn't gonna be no "draw" decision at New Orleans. There wasn't gonna be no second fight, and the champ wasn't gonna ever meet Kid Roberts if he could help it! The half-plastered Easton let all that fall from his silly-lookin' face some time between the fifth and sixth shot of grain alcohol, when he couldn't even recall who I was. The big tramp which held the title didn't want no part of Kid Roberts—what *he* wanted to do was to meet Tiger Capato, which same he figured would be a spread for him. Therefore, Capato was to put the Kid away in the battle of New Orleans and kill off our claims to a championship mill. The knockout was to come in Round Four, by the way.

In order to guarantee my boy goin' out, Carney and the yeggs which run this particular club had decided to pull one of the rawest stunts known to a game which packs more tricks than Houdini ever seen. This one has been staged dozens of times out in the bushes, but very rarely on the Big Time. It's usually pulled to allow a beaten man a few extry minutes to recover, but I never heard of it bein' used for the purpose Dummy Carney had figured it for against Kid Roberts.

Exactly at the end of the first minute's boxin' in Round Four every light in the clubhouse would suddenly grow dim and then go out for ten seconds! Kid Roberts, knowin' nothin' about this, would be as much startled as the crowd—certainly he'd falter in his stride, drop his hands and prob'ly step back to wait for light. But Tiger Capato, havin' nothin' else but this "accident" in his mind for weeks, would be prepared. The first slight dimmin' of the glare about the ring was to be the tip-off to him, and he'd start one from the floor just as it went black. It was a hundred to one he'd connect, and when the lights immediately flashed up again, Kid Roberts would be as cold as a pawnbroker's eye, and that guy which pulled the switch in the basement would be several blocks away from there and still travelin'. Then the announcer was to jump into the ring, calm the crowd by explainin' that it was simply a case of a fuse blowin' out, and order the quarrel started again at once! Now, even if the Kid was in any condition to get to the middle of the ring, he'd be a dazed mark for Capato then. The guys close to the ropes would of seen Capato start a wallop, and their opinion would be divided over the thing in the excitement. Many

would claim that, as neither boy could of known that a fuse was gonna blow out, the break was as fair for one as the other, and Capato had simply been lucky, or clever, enough to beat the Kid to the punch. The rest of the mob wouldn't know what it was all about, but they'd see the Kid on the floor, and that would be ample. Remember, it was Tiger Capato's home town!

As to this "lights out" stuff, any sportin' editor can supply names and dates of duplicates of the above sportsmanlike trick from his files to such gentle readers which is now grinnin' and callin' it impossible.

Well, as the time drawed near for the fight, I got crazier every day. I was afraid to tell Carney I'm wise to his plant for fear he'd call the bout off altogether and give the champ the excuse he was lookin' for to duck a battle with us. To make it worse, when I told the Kid what I'd found out, he laughed his head off and refused to believe it!

"Your mind has been preying on Dummy Carney for so long you'd believe anything!" he chortles. "Why, the thing's too preposterous to give a passing thought. Besides, you say yourself that your source of information was a drunken man, and you know an intoxicated person usually has a wonderful imagination. Not even a Carney would dare attempt anything as glaringly crooked as that—personally, I think the champion's manager has been joshin' you!"

Sweet Papa!

Any doubts I might of had about it myself was all wiped away in New Orleans a few hours before the clash, when word comes to our room that a lady has

got to see Kid Roberts on a matter of life and death. I could of choked the bell hop silly which brung up that sensational news because the damosels had been poison to the Kid up to date, and here on the brinks of the biggest fight in his career a Jane has got to butt in!

"Nothin' stirrin'!" I shouted to the boy. "Git outa here and close that door!" Me and a coupla handlers had the Kid flat on the bed, givin' him a final body massage.

"Here—just a minute!" pipes Roberts, sittin' up with a jerk. "Let's see what this is. I do not know why any lady should want to see me now, but if it's as important as that—" He reaches for a bath robe. "Have the lady come up!" he tells the wide-eyed boy.

There is a timid knock at the door in a few minutes, and in comes said lady. She's a thin, little, kinda wore-out dame, but very soothin' to the eyes at that. Her first bomb is that she will see Kid Roberts alone or not at all, and she seems terrible worked up. Without a word to us the Kid bows, opens the door to the sittin' room of this suite, ushers her in, and follows, closin' the door before I could make a move.

The conference lasts about ten minutes, durin' which time I died about seven times and cussed myself to death seven more for lettin' the Kid get out of my sight! The mysterious female goes right to the hall door, shakes the Kid's hand, makes him a present of a soulful glance, and blows.

"Well, what the—" I begins.

"That," says the Kid very solemnly, *"that—was Tiger Capato's wife!* A very sweet, wholesome little

woman and the mother of four children. She—eh—ah—she is afraid—well, she—this may sound absurd to you, but it didn't to *me,* not with the pathetic eagerness she told it! She had a dream last night in which she saw Capato—her husband—knocked out. As I say, you will smile, but, nevertheless, that woman is convinced that Capato is going to lose. I—ah—wish *I* were as certain!" he adds, with a short laugh. "However, she has asked me to do her a favor, which, under the circumstances, I could not well refuse. I—"

"For God's sake, what *have* you promised her, Kid?" I bawls, grabbin' him.

"Don't get excited!" he says, movin' away irritably. "As she explains it, Capato is married and has children. Prize fighting is his profession—it's the only thing he has ever done or can do well enough to make a living. He's a big favorite in this town, and a quick defeat would hurt his value to the clubs here to a great extent. Capato's wife simply wants me to allow him to make some kind of a showing for a few rounds—I tell you, she is as certain that he will ultimately lose as I am of my name! She sat there and repeated it over and over in a dull, toneless voice, with the fatalistic calm that is peculiar to the superstitious. You do not understand her type — I do. So, therefore, I will—"

"You'll knock Capato dead with the first punch if you can, or you'll leave the ring on a shutter!" I howls, dancin' around him. "You big fathead, don't you see *now* that Jack Easton's dope was right? They got that lights-out stunt framed for the fourth round, and she

simply wants to make sure that Capato will be in the ring up to then! Them guys is leavin' nothin' to chance. They—"

"Oh, stop it!" barks the Kid. "Hang it, man, you get on my nerves with your morbid belief that everyone is crooked! You've got me all upset *now* with your infernal nagging. Let me alone before I go to pieces and make a spectacle of myself in front of that crowd. If I didn't feel capable of taking care of myself, I wouldn't enter the ring. I'll let Capato stay three or four rounds for his wife's sake, and then go after him. I told that poor, worried little woman I'd do it, and I *will*. Now shut up!"

Up to the minute we crawled through the ropes he wouldn't budge a scant inch from that.

As a last desperate resort I grabbed hold of a sport writer and spilled the whole story in his doubtin' ears, so that when the fourth round *did* arrive I'd at the least be able to stop the fight and expose Dummy from the ring. You see, I had it doped out that the guy they'd planted at the switch in the basement would have a certain hour and minute to snap off the lights, and if I could jump into the ring and time my speech properly the house would go dark right at the end of it, provin' that I was tellin' the truth. The sport writer warmed up as I went on with the thing, and ended by tellin' me not to breathe a word of it to anybody else. He says if it was true it would be a whale of a yarn for his paper, and if it wasn't he'd personally see that I got run out of the fight game.

"By the way," I says, "is Capato married?"

"No!" says the sport writer, scribblin' away. "Why?"

"Nothin'!" I groans and staggered over to the Kid.

There was all smiles in Tiger Capato's corner when I fin'ly went across to examine his bandages, and Carney greets me with a chuckle. I suddenly leaned down and stuck my face right up to his ear.

"You pull them lights and eighty-seven coppers will be in this corner, you rat!" I snarls.

For just a fraction of a second Dummy drawed back and whitened, and then he showed he had missed his trade by not becomin' a actor.

"What's the idea—are you *scared* crazy?" he says. "What's this stuff about lights?"

I says nothin', but turned my undivided attention to Kid Roberts. The boy was a bundle of raw nerves—bouncin' up and down on his stool, slappin' his hands together with a quick, jerky movement, and bitin' his lips as he stared out at the yellin' crowd. Then the announcer called over to us to come to the center for a flashlight pose, but you couldn't hear a word over the din. Say—they was hangin' from the rafters, sittin' on each other, millin' all over the newspaper guys at the ringside, and pourin' in the doors which the coppers was fightin' to close. Out in the street some more thousands swarmed around waitin' to hear even some noise from inside and try to judge how the battle was goin' by that. The announcer called to the Kid again, got no action, and motioned to the time-keeper to get busy. That baby slams the gong for silence and—the Kid hears this bell, leaps off the stool, and was halfway across the ring, both hands workin', before we could grab him!

The roar of the mob hung fire for a minute, and then, as they took in the situation, a yell of laughs comes boomin' across the ring till it seemed to rattle the buildin'. Like the Kid, the crowd was on edge, nervous —almost hysterical—and the Kid's mistakin' that bell for the beginnin' of the fight busted the tension. But the effect of that tornado of hee-haws on Kid Roberts was as sudden as it was remarkable. He turned and faced the mob, pale as two dollars worth of skimmed milk, and from the look he give 'em I thought for a second he was gonna jump over the ropes and go to the mat with the entire attendance! His lips curled away from his flashin' white teeth in a snarl like a bad-tempered wolf's, and the steady glare in his eye caused friend announcer, which he wasn't even lookin' at, to step hurriedly aside. In a instant I seen one chance in a million to crab Dummy's frame-up and crab it to the royal families taste. The way he was geared up then, Kid Roberts could of licked the League of Nations, and my job was to keep him that way for two more minutes! Keep him tight strung to that cold, blood-cravin', murderin' rage before he could let down, think of Capato's "wife," or—

I grabbed his arm, let out one of them high-pitched, nerve-gratin' guffaws, holdin' my side with my free hand. "Why, you big boob!" I shrieks. "D'ye hear them babies givin' you the laugh? The thing's gonna be a farce! Ha, ha, ha, ha! My Gawd, I've handled some boneheads, but you win the garage! Sweet Mamma—you won't have to knock Capato dead; he'll die laughin'!"

"You *too,* eh?" he bites off through his set lips, and sends me head over heels through the ropes with a push. I must have took a funny fall, because off goes the mob into a fresh spasm, and Capato acted as laugh leader. They was still holdin' their ribs when the bell clanged for *real;* the newspaper guys, havin' made ample notes of all this stuff, settled back to watch a long, tough fight—when, before the clang has died out, Kid Roberts is plungin' into Tiger Capato's corner. The Tiger ain't had time to take the grin off his face, but the Kid took it off with a left jab that spun Capato around like a top and left a jagged, scarlet streak. There was no laughin' *now*—just a continuous roar, like a billion tons of coal goin' down a tin chute into a empty cellar. Shiftin' his headlong attack without a wasted motion, the Kid pinned the dumfounded Capato against the ropes in his own corner and begins shootin' lefts and rights to the body with the steady rap, rap, rap, rap of a steam riveter. This guy they called the Tiger never got a chance to set before he was halfways out on his feet. A newspaper guy next to me, callin' the punches to his telegraph operator, give it up in disgust and switches to: "In the first two minutes Kid Roberts belted Capato with everything but the club's franchise."

The frantic shrieks from his handlers stirred Capato into tryin' desperately to duck, dodge, cover up, or dive into a clinch, to escape the hurricane of leather that bounced him off the ropes and back again, but he might as well of tried to stop a grizzly's charge with a pea shooter. A terrific left to the stomach doubled him up like a match stick in its last glow, and, as his

rollin' head fell forward, a right swing connected with a crunchin' plop! Dead to the world, Tiger Capato slid along the lower rope, sagged there for a second, and then slid like a sack of flour under it and down almost in Dummy Carney's shakin' arms. The Kid stepped back and threw up his head.

"Laugh at that, you fools!" he roared, and walked to his corner in the nearest thing to silence I ever met in a fight club. Then the mob got its second wind, and they must of heard 'em in Los Angeles and figured another quake had arrived.

It took about five minutes for the crowd to get sane enough to even start for the doors, and it took about fifty cops to keep 'em out of the ring. The Kid's color had come back, and he's interested only in gettin' my word that I didn't get hurt when he dumped me through the ropes, and that I ain't off of him. He must of apologized ninety times at the least!

"By Gad, I need a keeper!" he says, still grippin' my hand. "I—I must have lost my head completely when that crowd gave me the laugh!" He give a shiver. "Ten thousand of them *laughing* at me—imagine, sitting there and jeering as if I were some sort of clown!" He blazed up again for a instant and then looks kinda shamefaced. "Darn it all," he says, shakin' his head, "I've broken my promise to Capato's wife—I said I'd let him stay, but that laugh drove everything out of my head but—"

"Shut up!" I howls, crazy with joy. "You done a *beaucoup* job."

A little guy shoves his way over to us. It's the

sportin' editor I had told about Dummy's attempt to frame us. He looks sore.

"Say!" he growls, "what kind of a thing were you tryin' to put over on me with that double-crossin' pipe dream of yours? Of all the weird yarns I ever heard, that leads the league! You New York guys must think everybody that don't live within subway distance of Times Square is a hick, hey? So they was gonna job that man-eater of yours in the fourth round—just like a movie, eh? Villain in the cellar at the switchboard and everything else. Shame on you!" he says, waggin' his finger at me and pullin' out his watch. "I must have had a wisp of hay in my mouth when you come along. Let's see now, the slaughter started at 10 p. m. on the dot, and it's now pretty near twenty after—ten-nineteen, to be correct—so that your conspirator in the basement, not knowin' that the party's all over, would be throwin' off that switch in about a minute—which would have been shortly after the start of the fatal fourth round. Then the fiendish Tiger Capat—"

He never finished the rest of that because, without no warning, every light in the place went out!

ROUND SIX

WHIPSAWED!

THE gift of bein' able to *think,* whilst his charmin' opponent is merrily bouncin' gloves off his achin' bean, has turned seemin'ly certain defeat into a sensational victory for many's the battered and punch-drunk box fighter. Next to the ability to knock a man kickin' with either hand and the heart to weather a sudden unexpected hurricane of crushin' rights and lefts to the body or jaw, coolness under fire is the most important part of the high-class leather pusher's make-up. Hundreds of promisin' kids, which can hit like Caruso can sing and take punishment like the information clerk at a railroad station, never get past the semi-finals because the only use they make of their heads is to butt the other guy with.

They know that a punch on the jaw will prob'ly knock their tête-à tête for a goal if it lands on what is known to the trade as the "button," and with that idea firmly planted in their mind they sail out of their corner at the first bell and begin wildly swingin' at the bobbin' chin in front of 'em with gusto and abandon. As far as they're concerned, the other baby ain't got no short ribs, kidneys, heart, stomach, or any of the other places where a well-timed right or

left smash might end the thing and send the crowd home hoarse and rejoicin'. They once flattened a guy with a roundhouse swing to the jaw, and they're now convinced that all they is to the art of box fightin' is jab with the left to the body and then, as friend opponent's guard comes down, cross the right to the jaw.

It's comical to watch them boneheads work when they're in there tryin' with a cool-headed, clever kid which gets 'em all figured out in Round One and makes 'em punchin' bags from then on. The fast boxer, which ain't especially fond of takin' it, knows they're dangerous right up to the last bell, no matter how badly he's outpointed 'em, because one properly placed clout from this flounderin' tramp may put him out for half a hour. So, guessin' their every move and bein' sure of his own footwork, he keeps stickin' his chin invitin'ly in front of 'em. The boob's eyes glitters and he stabs his ponderous left feint for the body, at the same time drawin' back the deadly right so's a guy sixteen miles from the clubhouse would know what he figured on doin' with it. The boss boxer makes a play at droppin' his guard. The boob swings, misses, and is exceedin'ly surprised to find his own right eye beginnin' to close and the mob yellin' for his immediate extinction. He shakes his head doubtfully, pulls a silly grin, and tries again, with the same result. Next time maybe the other kid walks into the right swing, lets it go over his shoulder, and shakes the tramp from stem to stern with half a dozen rights and lefts to his wide-open body before the disgusted referee pulls 'em apart. And so it goes to the final gong, the clever guy which can't hit pilin'

up points and the ham with the man-killin' wallop rippin' the air with useless wallops which tire him out and make him a set-up, because he ain't got brains enough to realize his attack is all wrong and needs to be mixed up a bit to get results.

The toughest job a pilot of box fighters has is to hammer into the usual mass of concrete between the neck and hair of his meat cards the importance of watchin' at all times durin' a hard bout for the lucky break which means a win for the guy which takes advantage of it. It may be a little incident which the crowd never sees. For the example, many's the guy I've seen knocked cold the instant he reached down mechanically to give a hitch to a pair of slippin' tights. The other baby had noticed that his playfellow's trunks was loose and was waitin' till he reached down to grab 'em, knowin' that for maybe a eighth of a second his guard would be lowered—and—well, a eighth of a second's enough! The heavyweight championship of dear old England once depended on a thing as small and seemin'ly as unimportant as that. Pull your chairs up close, and I'll just about kill the next half hour with the tale.

About two months after we have knocked Tiger Capato dead in a round—the Tiger bein' supposedly the last hurdle between us and the champ—me and Kid Roberts is convened in our lair at the hotel in New York discussin' the fascinatin' subject of box fightin'. The indications was that the champ's movie contracts would keep him outside the ropes for the worst part of a year, but in the meanwhile we have got to eat and likewise add to this bank roll for the

Kid's busted old man. Business in our line was very dull in the land the Marines made famous, for the reason that we have trimmed all the good heavies and the Kid will not under no circumstances frame a scrap or fight set-ups.

"It's more than eight weeks since I fought Capato," the Kid growls, pacin' up and down the room like a irritated panther. "In that time we haven't earned a penny, and I haven't drawn on a glove. I'm getting stale through lack of work and—"

"Just a minute," I says soothin'ly. "It's your own fault we can't get no work. If you'd of saved up some of them boloneys for return dates, instead of bouncin' 'em all in a couple of rounds, we could go back over the circuit like the rest of 'em does and clean up again. Now, the only way we can get a fight —"

"Is to join the Polish army, I suppose!" butts in the Kid bitterly. "Well, if—"

"No!" I hollers, jumpin' up. "Not Poland, but England! France and England, where the set-ups runs wild and where any guy which gets through two fights without bein' knocked kickin' is made champion of Europe in whatever class he's in. Why, you'll be a riot over there, Kid; I must of been crazy not to of thought of it before!"

"Well, don't talk about it; let's go!" snarls the Kid, nervously reachin' for his hat. "I'm going out and walk off some of this depression, and incidentally I'll find out about passports and accommodations—it will give me something to do. This infernal inactivity is driving me mad and it must be damned unpleasant

for you, old man, to have to bear the brunt of my beastly temper."

"That's all right, son," I grins, pattin' him on the back. "All *real* fighters is temperamental, whether they work with their head or their hands. By the way, speakin' of fightin' and the etc., d'ye know our contract run out last week and that right now they ain't a thing holdin' you to me if you want to cut loose? You're no fifty-dollar preliminary ham any more, Kid; you're the next world's heavyweight champion, with a possible half million iron men ready to fall into your pockets in two or three years. Also, you ain't no bone-headed roughneck which don't know what it's all about; you got a college education, a business head, and somethin' I'll never have—class! If it come to it, you could make your own matches, look after your own affairs, and a few extry pennies will get you experienced handlers to swing a towel in your corner every time you start. All this would mean a savin' to you of half your earnin's—the half I get now. I want you to know just how you stand so's you can make your own choice, Kid, because you—well, you been different than any guy I ever handled: we been more like pals than manager and box fighter—and I got a right to enjoy the sensations of bein' square if I wanna."

The Kid come over and takin' both my hands in them bone crushers of his, presented me with a full-toothed smile.

"As long as I remain in the ring I want you to look after the business end of my affairs," he says.

"It was your canny matchmaking, whole-hearted encouragement and the shrewd advice and training you gave me that took me as far as I am now! It was also you who bullied the promoters into giving me the guarantees I've been getting and got my price raised from two hundred a bout to five hundred and more a round. I'm not going to cast you aside now, just when there's a chance for you to cash in on your efforts. No, we'll stick together until the finish and keep the split at fifty-fifty, old man. You're earning your share as much as I earn mine. Why, if I couldn't look over when the going gets rough and see you in my corner, I'd be as helpless as a rudderless ship! As you say, we've been pals—and pals don't break over money. We don't need a contract. I'm sure our friendship is stronger than any legal sheet of paper. Let's continue as we have been doing on a—a—gentlemen's agreement. Does that hit you all right?"

Did it hit *me* all right? I'll ejaculate it did! Imagine a blue-corpuscled, classy, inlaid in the decanter aristocrat like him, intimatin' out loud that I am what is known as a gentleman. Sweet Mamma, should he of gave me a hundred thousand bucks right then, I wouldn't of felt no better!

Well, about ten days later we are out on the boundin' billows on the en route to King George's home town, and they ain't no hospital and few cemeteries in the world containin' a guy one-fifth as sick as me. For three days I was a object which would of aroused pity in the chest of a Bowery loan shark, and I accumulated some doubts about Columbus discoverin' America,

on the account I don't believe anybody ever stayed on the ocean that long. With the Kid, how the so ever, it was all different. The boy had sailed a mean yacht and the etc. when his masculine parent had large quantities of sugar, and he was as much at home in the cradle of the deep as a barnacle. He dragged me out of the cabin where I had crawled to die in peace and made me gallop around the deck, till, much to my dumfounded astonishment, I was able to listen to the dinner bugle without goin' into convulsions as heretofore.

About four days after the ship has been caperin' wildly hithers and yon on the ocean, and I have decided they is more heroes in the navy than any other place in the wide, wide world, a ball is had on the heels of supper. The Kid drags out his "Curse you, Jack Dalton!" scenery, wraps it around his manly form, and won't have it no other way but that I climb into the one he made me stake myself to and join the merry mob on the promenade deck. As a dancer, I'm a fine box-fight manager! I don't know the difference between a bar of music and a bar of soap, provided they is any, and after I have sit out a couple of one-steps with Janes which would be safe anywheres and which talked about their varied operations and how many times they had been across, I escaped to the smokin' room on the account of preferrin' the male liars to the female pests.

But Kid Roberts had a field day with the ladies as per usual. This big blond in evenin' clothes was a sight which would of made Apollo take arsenic, and, Sweet Mamma, how the women did set sail for

him, once he started steppin' out on that ballroom floor! Young, old, and unhappy mediums in between crowded around the Kid, vampin' him silly, while their boy friends and bitter halfs let forth glowers of rage.

How the so ever, while Kid Roberts had a fatal weakness for the sex made famous by the Garden of Eden, I didn't get particularly nervous as long as he played no favorites but kept circulatin' hithers and yon among the beautiful girls, some of which was in evenin' gowns which would of wrung a gasp from Annette Kellermann.

But, alas and alackaday, my worst fears come to a head when along around the shanks of the evenin' a couple of newcomers appeared on the scenes, in the shape of a inclined-to-be elderly and dignified gent and a inclined-to-be young and dazzlin' girl. Aside from everything else, money and class stuck out all over 'em. Kid Roberts let forth a gasp and flashed white for the part of a second when the old boy drawed off the girl's opera cloak, revealin' some thin' in the feminine line which would of mesmerized Adam into givin' Eve her apple back untasted. Sweet Papa, what a knockout she was! One of them little de luxe editions of the world's greatest mystery story, viz., woman: hair a bewilderin' fluff of polished copper, eyes as fascinatin' as a month-old baby's and less sophisticated, a complexion which would retail for about ten thousand fish, could you get it in a can and a—eh—a figure which would make the front row of the Ziegfeld Follies seem like a shapeless mass. I figured her age at about half a

hour past nineteen, and they is no doubt that many's the tall, willowy blonde took one look at this vest-pocket size heart breaker that night and wished she had missed the boat!

The Kid was down for the count after the first look, and the luck of fools and lovers, which is the same thing, was with him. Over comes the old gent himself whilst this second Venus is dancin' with some bimbo which must of been born with a four-leafed clover in each hand.

"Pardon me," remarks the apparent father of the prettiest girl on our popular planet, whilst he pulls a grin which tags him to me as a regular guy. "You're Kane Halliday, are you not?"

The Kid looks kind of flushed, but he was always there with the old drawin'-room stuff. "I am," he admits, with a well-placed bow. "But you have the advantage of me, I'm afraid."

"I suppose so," says old Father William. "It's some years since I last saw you, and then you were too busy to stop for a chat."

He puts his hand on the Kid's shoulder and throws that grin into high.

"You were—ah—going through eleven husky young Harvard cubs with a pigskin tucked under your left arm!"

The Kid blushes like a bevy of schoolgirls, but before he can set the old guy goes on: "I'm Senator Brewster of New York, a schoolmate of your dear mother's—whom you greatly resemble—and an admirer of your prowess in the twenty-four-foot square. I saw your last fight with Kennedy and

it was a corker. Halliday, your right hook to the jaw is the fastest thing I've ever seen inside of a glove and I haven't missed a championship bout in the last twenty-five years!"

"You're a boxing enthusiast, then?" inquires the Kid with the greatest of relief, whilst a wanderin' eye fixes itself on the girl which had been with the old boy.

"Indeed, I am!" says our elderly tête-à-tête, with a touch of gusto. "Much to the annoyance of Dolores —my daughter—whose feminine curiosity led her to witness one prize fight with me and who, I am sure, will never see another! Not understanding the—eh—fine points of the game, she thought it merely a brutal and disgusting exhibition—to quote her verbatim. I've been boxing with an instructor at my club in Washington for nearly a year, and I feel like a boy of twenty. I don't know what a doctor looks like, and I'm eating and sleeping like a Hoosier farm hand! If you intend doing any training to keep in condition on the trip across, Halliday, I'd be delighted to come down to the very excellent gymnasium they have on the lower deck and—ah—limber up a bit with you."

The Kid smiles down at this good old sport, which, for all his white hair and wrinkled face, looked the photograph of health and likewise able to give a good account of himself, fisticuffally speakin' should the occasion ever come up.

"I shall be pleased to have you, senator," says Kid Roberts, and then, realizin' that him and the sen. is far from alone, he introduces me with not a little

zest. The president baiter seemed tickled silly to be hangin' out with the famous Kid Roberts and his equally likable manager, and I was *beaucoup* glad that I'd had brains enough to be caparisoned in a dress suit, the first and only time in my gay young life I ever give a U. S. or an any other senator the pleasure of shakin' hands with me.

"I want you to meet my daughter," says the gentleman from New York, and the Kid's eyes takes on a glint which might of caused the senator to reconsider his proposition, if he had noticed it.

The Kid smiles and then immediately gets serious. "Perhaps," he says quietly, "perhaps Miss Brewster would not care to be introduced to a—a—prize fighter, in view of her dislike of boxing."

"Eh—ahem," says the senator, linking his arm in the Kid's,—"I—ah—Halliday, whatever you may be doing now and for whatever reason, you are a gentleman born. You forgot I reminded you that your mother and I were schoolmates. For a heavyweight boxer you are singularly free from the usual marks of your profession and — ah — it might be as well not to mention your—ah—calling to Dolores just now. It seems to me that we can find many other interesting subjects to discuss."

The Kid bowed, but they was a queer look on his face, and the next thing I know we are havin' another orgy of introductions, and then Dolores Brewster and the Kid is slidin' over the polished floor and me and Senator Brewster is out in the smokin' room talkin' box fightin' and drinkin' none of your business!

Well, from that minute till we fin'ly reached the bustlin' village of Liverpool, Kid Roberts hung around Dolores Brewster like she was a glass bowl and he was a gold fish. They danced, eat, walked, talked, bridge-whisted, ouija-boarded, and whatnot together till they was the talk of the ship.

When the Irish coast looms up on the horizon the Kid bounces into our cabin at the witchin' hours of midnight and without no preliminaries knocks me for a goal by announcin' he's gonna wed Dolores Brewster at his earliest possible convenience. This was about the eighteenth romantical affair de heart which had occurred to the Kid since he come under my wings and about the first one to show the earmarks of bein' annoyin'ly serious on the part of both sides. I spent somthin' like two hours beggin', threatenin', pleadin', and arguin' with Kid Roberts against allowin' himself to be dragged to a altar before he had became heavyweight champ of the entire world. He sit on the side of his berth with a faraway and long-ago look on his face and a shoe in his hand, and when I get all through on the account I got to get my breath, he let forth a sigh and remarks to a near-by porthole:

"And to think—to think we're going to be married as soon as we reach London!"

Sweet Mamma, a guy in love is tough to take!

How the so ever, I'm still hopin' that somethin' untoward will come to the pass as of yore before this love's young dream can turn into a nightmare for me. My wildest hopes was realized the night we anchored in a river which the English has nicknamed

the Mersey. The Kid and his charmer is givin' the dark deck and moonlight thing a heavy play folleyin' the customary dancin' and by dumb's luck I happen to almost stumble over 'em whilst I'm taking a slight promenade. I have never listened at no keyholes or the like in my life, as I am not that type of guy, but I could not prevent myself hearin' Miss Dolores Brewster tell the Kid that unless he give up the prize ring at once and immediately, all bets was off. He was a nice, bright, handsome, and ambitious kid, but she wanted no leather pushers in hers, and that was *that!*

I leave it to you how I waited and hung on the Kid's answer. They was no question but that he was head over heels as far as Dolores was concerned and everybody in the world knows that a guy which has fell a victim to love's sweet charms ain't got the brains of a gnat left in his head. The heavyweight title and all the sugar which went with it was loomin' in the offin' and if Kid Roberts threw away his gloves *now*—Woof, just thinkin' about it got me on the brink of the hysterics!

"My dear," he says, "what you ask is impossible. I have gone too far to turn back now. The atmosphere of the prize ring is almost as obnoxious to me as it is to you, but until I have earned enough money to rehabilitate my father and myself I must go on. Also, you seem to forget that if we are to be"—the boy's voice shook a bit, and he leaned closer if that was possible—"if we are to be married, I must have enough money to insure your—"

"Father has more money than he knows what to do with," she butts in, layin' a vampish hand on his arm.

"He is very fortunate," remarks the Kid kinda chilly, as he straightened up. "But your father's money has nothing whatever to do with me. No, dear, if this were a book or a moving picture, I would probably renounce my present profession in a highly melodramatic manner, and then it would be discovered that I am really the heir to the throne of Alluvia, or something like that, in disguise. But being sordid reality, I'm afraid I'll have to play my hand out to the finish. There is too much at stake for me to give up now!"

Dolores played her ace. She give vent to a sigh and presented the Kid with a glance, which if it made *me* dizzy, what do you figure it must of done to *him?*

"Even for me?" she murmurs.

"Even for you!" answers the Kid, hoarse but firm.

Dolores Brewster gathered up her cloak and drifted into the cabin without as much as a glance or a answer to the Kid's dazed exclamation.

So that was all settled!

Three weeks after the above came to the pass, me and Kid Roberts is located at Hampstead Heath, a burg on the hoopskirts of dear old London, trainin' for a scheduled twenty-round muss with Bandsman Shayne, heavyweight assault and battery champion of the United (ha, ha!) Kingdom of Ireland and Great Britain.

I signed articles for the entertainment whilst the

Kid was scourin' Blighty with a vacuum cleaner in a effort to find Dolores Brewster. Bandsman Shayne was likewise among those absent at the signin' of the articles, the pugilistic pride of England bein' tourin' the outlands as a vaudeville attraction. So the young men didn't meet when us managers convened at the National Sportin' Club and, over a couple of seidels of the stuff the Anti-Saloon League made famous, accepted a purse of four thousand pounds for the massacre, to be split 60 per cent to the winner and 40 per cent to the guy they carried out. Bandsman Shayne's manager was a tall, slim, walrus-whiskered baby which packed a shifty eye and mixed a mean highball. He looked, talked, and acted like the undefeated champion boob of the world, and that's what I figured him. Oo la la, what a awakenin' I got!

Well the Kid took to his trainin' like Mary Pickford took to a camera and within a week I was practically out of sparrin' partners. Cut to the quick by the charmin' Miss Brewster havin' gave him the raspberry, he went around snarlin' and growlin' like a peeved bear, and he seemed to get a lot of relief by batterin' his handlers from pillar to post.

I found handlers as scarce in and around Hampstead Heath as silence is in a locomotive works, and when about ten days before the fight a big husky strolls into our camp and asks for a job I could of kissed him, and for all I know I did! This boy was one tough-lookin' baby and he had "I-can-take-it!" wrote all over him. He was a good fifteen pounds heavier than my 195 ringside Kid Roberts and fully

as tall, and before he ever raised a glove I knowed he had been to the races many's the time before, by the way he climbed through the ropes of the trainin' ring. He claimed he was entitled Gunner Enright and was due to go to the post himself in a couple of weeks. He says likewise that he wants experience more than anything else and would give the Kid all the limberin' up he could stand for two pounds a week and board.

Gunner Enright had been in our midst just one hour, English time, when I was fallin' over my own feet makin' him propositions to come back to the U. S. under my management, for I seen that this bimbo could knock two-thirds of our second-rate heavies for a row of refuse containers. Kid Roberts was as happy as a bride winnin' her first argument and promised this guy a bonus if he trimmed the Engish title holder, because the Gunner was givin' him the first real workouts he'd had since we hit the old country. He was fast, he was clever, he could hit, and he could take it, and that's all even the A. E. F. could do, hey?

Gunner Enright told me he'd think over my proposition to come back with us to the formerly Land of the Spree, and when I asked him was this Bandsman Shayne a false alarm or a *beaucoup* puncher, the Gunner curls his wolf's lip and pans the English champ for half a hour. He claims the box-fightin' musician is as yellah as the Chinese flag, has ducked either twelve or eighty-six chances to meet him, and that Kid Roberts should put him away with three or four clouts at the utmost.

A few days before the large clash the Kid draws

me aside whilst waitin' for the Gunner to get into his trainin' togs, and they's a queer smile on his face.

"This Enright would be a sensation in America if he was properly matched," he says. "No man I have fought has given me a stiffer argument than he does when he gets warmed up to his work. He's a terrific body puncher and can also take his gruel without flinching—if you've noticed, he's scarcely taken a backward step in all the workouts we've had together. I have the firm conviction that this fellow has never really cut loose yet. He gives me the impression many times that he's holding back his returns. Tell him to-day to let me have everything he has in stock. If I can't handle a sparring partner, I've got no business in the same ring with a champion, and the sooner I find it out the better!"

I grinned and glanced toward Gunner Enright, which was comin' over with the gloves.

"'As usual before every big scrap you got a attack of nerves," I say. "I'll tell this cuckoo to give you the works, and then I want you to knock him out—just so's he won't kid himself that he could take you if he wanted to."

The Kid shakes his head. "I'm not going to punish any sparring partner unnecessarily," he says. "I'm getting plenty of work letting them come to *me* and simply standing them off. You've seen that I always let them clinch and recover when I forget myself and sting them a bit. I've been a little more strenuous with this man than with the others, only because he can assimilate punishment and seems to fight better

when he's shaken up. Tell him to try and knock me out—I want to see what he's concealing."

They boxed three two-minute rounds, goin' at it hammer and tongs, and they was a lot more action in this thing than in many's the real mill I've looked at. Gunner Enright took me at my word, and if he didn't endeavor to knock my comin' champ for a goal, then Grant didn't care whether he win the Civil War or not! The Gunner was gettin' a trifle too fast for me, and had opened up a old gash over the Kid's left eye which bled rather lavishly, when I called a halt. Right before I bawled "Time!" he staggered Roberts with a beautiful right to the head, and the Kid, thoroughly enjoyin' himself, come back with two lefts to the jaw that dropped the enthusiastic Gunner to his knees. That was ample for me, and I stopped the show. Much to my amazement, the Gunner apparently lost his head and insisted on continuin' the quarrel. He begin by pleadin' and wound up by gettin' nasty. When he hollered that he could "Bash the bleedin' Yank's fyce in!" meanin' the highly amused Kid, I paid him off and, with the kindly assistance of a couple of volunteers, throwed him out of the camp.

The night of the Kid Roberts-Bandsman Shayne fracas they closed all doors of the National Sportin' Club at half past eight. The main event wasn't due to get under way till ten, but the galleries and other seats for the middle clawsses and the etc. each contained two guys a few minutes after the entrances opened at seven. This Shayne person had a followin' which can only be compared to the one Roosevelt had and they was all there to see their man give the American leather

pusher the trimmin' of his young life. The English sports figured the bout would be a spread for their champ, and before my exactin' duties called me to the dressin' room, I had got down five thousand fish on the possibilities of the Kid's right hook to the jaw at 2½ to 1.

The weights was announced as: Kid Roberts, 196½; Bandsman Shayne, 214.

Bandsman Shayne was already in his corner when we come to the party, as I had purposely made him wait for us to see what it would do to his nerves. I was very anxious for my first flash at him, and so was the Kid, but he had so many handlers and the like flittin' around him that it was the same as impossible to view him. Fin'ly the referee called us to the center of the ring for final instructions, and Bandsman Shayne stepped forward, facin' the Kid.

Roberts gave vent to a gasp which could of been and no doubt *was* heard in Shantung, and, Sweet Papa—I liked to fell through the ropes!

Bandsman Shayne was no less than our old pal and formerly chore boy, "Gunner Enright!"

I don't know whether that referee told us we was allowed to kick and bite in the clinches and that knives would be furnished after the first round or not. I never heard a word he said, for I was gettin' set to clip Bandsman Shayne's grinnin' manager on the button, when the white-faced Kid Roberts shoved me away. The referee raised his eyebrows and coldly motioned me to our corner, where I slumped up against the ropes in a trance. Think what that English—ah

—ah—cuckoo had pulled on us! Knowin' we'd never seen the Bandsman, he sends his man up to *train* for this championship battle with the very man he's gonna *fight!* A instant's thought will show the dummest bimbo in captivity the priceless advantages Bandsman Shayne win for himself by this raw trick. He's worked out every day with the guy he's gonna face in the ring for the real muss. He's apparently learned every punch, every trick, and every weakness of his comin' versus, whilst at the same time, by skillful fakin' of his own work, he's gave away no information of value on himself. He's givin' us about two minutes to shift our carefully rehearsed and long-planned scheme of battle and he's grabbed off a powerful asset in the moral blow this last-minute discovery handed the Kid, which walked slowly back to his corner waitin' the openin' gong, every muscle doin' a dance, his teeth fastened in his lower lip and his face whiter than eight dollars' worth of cream. They wasn't a dozen guys around that ring which after one searchin' glance wouldn't of bet fifty to one Kid Roberts didn't last a round with the laughin', jokin', and supremely confident Bandsman Shayne. Before I could rouse myself and make a last desperate protest to have the mill called off, the old cowbell rung out.

They hadn't exchanged three wallops before I seen we was in for a rough evenin', if not for crushing defeat! This Bandsman Shayne was a *fighter* and the Kid was wilder than a Borneo circus attraction. In his desire to end matters at once, Roberts missed a half dozen leads, and the smilin' Bandsman peppered

him at short range with rights and lefts to the body that had the Kid flounderin' about the ring, punch drunk and weary before the openin' frame was half over. I don't think Kid Roberts landed four clean wallops durin' the entire session. He simply got off on the wrong foot and couldn't set himself thereafter. Comin' out of a clinch, the Bandsman deliberately butted my boy with his head, layin' his right cheek open and drenchin' him scarlet. The referee politely warned the Englishman in response to my frantic yells of "Foul!" and, a few seconds ahead of the gong, Shayne connected with a long overhand right to the jaw that sprawled the Kid on his face in a neutral corner. He was on one knee, shakin' his head to clear it and gazin' at me for advice, when the referee had counted "eight" and the welcome bell rung.

They is a mild clappin' of hands around the ringside and some real old-fashioned yells from the galleries whilst we're hustlin' the Kid to his corner and workin' over him. I guess to everybody but me he looked a beaten man! His left eye was completely closed, his lips puffed and swollen, and the gash in his right cheek took five stitches to close. But his wind was still perfect, a cold vicious grin had took the place of the nervous twitchin' of his mouth, and as he shook the water I doused him with from his blond hair he grunted: "'This fellow can hit, but I'll get him in the next round!"

Round two opened with the Kid dancin' lightly around the confident Bandsman and suddenly hookin' his right to the head and smashin' his left to the body. The Englishman looked surprised and backed to the

ropes cautiously, showin' a beautiful defense for the Kid's determined efforts to hook his right to the jaw. They fiddled around for a minute, each tryin' to connect with one solid smash that would finish it, and then Shayne worked close, leanin' his entire weight on the Kid so's to get the full advantage of that extry seventeen pounds weight. In response to my frenzied yells which caused amazed stares from the ringsiders, Roberts fought himself free and drove Shayne to the ropes with a hurricane of rights and lefts to the head and face. A left swing buried the Kid's glove to the wrist in the Bandsman's short ribs and gaspin', the champ begin to wilt. Roberts feinted swiftly with the same left and then crossed his right to the mouth, bringin' a stream of crimson as the Bandsman begin to tin-can desperately around the ring. Pinned in his own corner, the English mauler showed he was a ring general by pretendin' to be dazed and groggy and slumpin' back against the ropes. The Kid fell for it, and, as he sprang in to finish him, Shayne suddenly straightened up and drove Roberts back on his heels with a perfectly timed right hook, followin' that with four stingin' jabs to the mouth with his left before the astonished Kid could set. It looked like anybody's fight, and they was toe to toe exchangin' wallops at the bell.

The second the Kid is on his stool I am yellin' into his ear: "'What's that guy suckin' his lips in for, d'ye know? I been watchin' him all through this round and he keeps puckerin' up like he had somethin' in his mouth. What is it?"

The Kid glanced up, kinda puzzled. "I—why—I don't know, I'm sure," he says. "Unless—well, the first punch I landed in this round caught him square on the open mouth. It may be that I loosened one of his teeth and he's drawing on it to get it loose enough to—"

"To get rid of it, to get rid of it!" I hollers. "Just what I had doped out! Now listen to every word I'm gonna say, because it means a quick knockout if you folley my instructions. *Pay no attention to any part of this tramp but his mouth!* That tooth's gettin' looser and looser and pretty soon it'll come all the ways out and—*get this now*—he'll turn his face for a second to spit it out! Get that? He'll *have* to turn his face to one side; it's a natural movement. You keep watchin' him suck away on that tooth. When he turns his face to get rid of it, be set to let him have the right on the button. It's a fifty to one shot, but if you connect, you're heavyweight champion of England!"

The Kid's eyes flashed and he reached a glove for my hand and shook it silently, but hard enough to make it ache for a week. Then the bell brought him off his stool to the center of the ring, where Bandsman Shayne begin peckin' away at his sore eye with the flashiest left I've seen since Jack Johnson's. The Kid snapped over a wallop now and then, but his one good eye was glued to the Bandsman's puckerin' lips, and his deadly right, flickin' back and forth, was ready for immediate use. Suddenly they both started a rally at the same time in mid ring, and after Roberts had drove Shayne's head back six times without a return

with right and left hooks, the Englishman had enough and dove into a clinch. They wrestled all over the ring, crashed into the ropes and slid along 'em, the Bandsman hangin' on for his life and the arm-weary Kid desperately tryin' to wriggle free. The referee tore 'em apart in our corner, and the Kid swiftly stuck his left in Shayne's face. The English champ shook his head, worked his lips for a instant, and then twisted his neck slightly as he spat out the tooth. The Kid's right had started with the workin' of the lips and it connected just as Shayne's jaw was swingin' back, addin' double force to the blow which lifted the Bandsman a good three inches off the floor, turned him half around, and brought him to the mat with a crash that shook the buildin', the first part to touch the canvas bein' his shoulder blades.

The referee could of counted a billion. At "ten" the body had scarcely settled. So that was *that!*

A half hour later we're comin' out of the dressin' room when a silk-hatted, evenin'-dressed, and familiar-lookin' gent busts into us. A close inspection reveals that it is no less than our old shipmate, Senator Brewster. He grabs the Kid, hugs him, waves a American flag, hugs me, jabs another flag into my coat lapel, and in a hoarse voice which he claims he contracted durin' the first round, tells Kid Roberts he has saved his country's honor, E Pluribus Unum and Nux Vomica, and that he personally can lick Bandsman Shayne, all his handlers, and the referee!

"But come on!" he winds up out of breath. "I have a car waiting outside, and we'll all go over to

my hotel and—why, say, Dolores won't be able to speak above a whisper for a week! She—"

We're out on the street by this time, and the excited Sen. Brewster is shovin' a path through the half-crazy Americans to a big tourin' car which contains one terrible pretty girl, answerin' to the name of Dolores Brewster, in the rear seat. She puts everything she has on a smile, presents it to the dumfounded Kid.

"Dolores!" he whispers, turnin' to the old man. "Why—what—how—did—what is *she* doing here? You never brought her to see—"

"She gave me no peace until I did!" grins the happy old gent. "She insisted upon seeing you annihilate the English champion, and, why, in the second round she—"

"'My God!" breathes the Kid, lookin' at her. "You *saw* that bestial exhibition?"

"I most certainly did, Kane," smiles Dolores, with the greatest of enthusiasm. "I'm so glad you won, but of course father and I knew you would. Why, we were sitting only a few yards from the—ah, ring, isn't it?—and father won some huge sum on you, and I didn't think it was brutal at all! Who and where do you fight to-morrow night, dear?"

To-morrow night. Sweet Papa, tie that!

ROUND SEVEN

YOUNG KING COLE

Gray matter pays as big dividends in the prize ring as it does in any other game, and many's the battle-scarred old veteran is in there now takin' on the top-notchers for big guarantees and stallin' off these hard-hittin' but slow-thinkin' young bruisers by simply outguessin' 'em, just as Christy Mathewson pitched winnin' ball long after he was past his prime by usin' his head as somethin' more than a convenient place to hang his cap. It's a real treat to watch the master ring artist (not the knock-'em-dead slugger) at work. Fast as wireless, cool as a January breeze, merciless as a famished tiger, he can do with a pair of four-ounce gloves what the average guy might accomplish with a baseball bat and a ax. He goes around his man like a cooper around a barrel, makin' him dizzy with lightin' feints and slashin' him to ribbons with jabs that cut and sting like the flick of a bull whip in the hands of a master mule skinner.

The razzin' of the mob which resents his cleverness and craves blood and knockdowns worries him the same way they worry in Hades over the price of foot warmers. He's there for *business,* and from his expression you'd think him and the guy he's swappin'

wallops with was the only two guys in the world, let alone in the clubhouse.

Does the tramp rock him with a chance smash, and he curls a contemptuous lip over his shoulder at the yowlin' pack whilst he clinches to steady himself, then pushes this boloney away and, with a couple of vicious jolts, makes him back-pedal nervously, wilt, and cover up. He never gets excited, never gets mad enough to miss, never stops studyin' his man's weaknesses till the quarrel's over. Floored, he don't lose his head and bounce up before the referee can begin the arithmetic lesson, like the tramp does when he *can* in fear of the mob's roar of "Yellah!" Instead, he takes a long count —it uses up precious time and gives him a chance to *think,* and when he *does* get up, unless he's out on his his feet, the other guy is due for a lively couple of minutes, if not for a knockout!

From the instant this baby steps out at the openin' clang of the old cowbell, he's a student and a finished workman. He's generally got some plan of battle all doped in advance, but if that don't give him immediate results he shifts to another and another with a speed and skill that gives the real lover of boxin' more genuine thrills than a dozen knockdowns. He finds out whether the other guy don't like it in the jaw or body, and works accordin'ly. He discovers whether his little playmate wilts under rough handlin' in the clinches or if rushin' him to the ropes and pinnin' him there makes him wild with his returns. He tries talkin' to him, shakin' a wicked tongue in a effort to stir the other guy into a crazy rage which will make him throw caution to the breezes and tear in wide open, willin' to risk anything

for a chance to stick over a haymaker. Then the old master flits about the maddened slugger, rippin' in stingin' hooks and jabs and keepin' up a runnin' fire of conversation which would make a paralytic rabbit take a punch at a Bengal tiger. Till at length, arm weary and discouraged, the pantin' tramp staggers about the ring a crimson, battered hulk that dully wishes only one thing in this wide, wide world, and that's the sound of the final bell!

Every guy has his weak point—even Adam was a apple addict—and these cool-headed glove artists is no exception. The trouble with these flashy boxers is that nine and seven-eighths times out of ten they can't *hit.* To jazz a well-known sayin', they can lead their man to slaughter, but they cannot make him sink! And the mob don't want no part of these babies which could box ten rounds under a needle shower without gettin' hit by a drop of water. They want to see somethin' *fall,* and as a result these cool, shifty scientists never get the popularity that comes to a killer of the Dempsey type.

How the so ever, occasionally up pops a miracle which not only does he pack a opiate in each glove, but he's also got somethin' connected with his dome besides a couple of tin ears. He can box with the boxers, slug with the sluggers, and give the gluttons for punishment acute indigestion. Kid Roberts belonged to this class, and it was usin' his cranium when his right cross wasn't enough in his brawl with Gournet, the French champ, which turned certain defeat into a sudden, sensational win.

The Bandsman Shayne mêleé kind of throwed a damper over business for a spell, as the rest of the English fistic stars figured the Kid was too tough for 'em after readin' the punch-by-punch account of that nuss. We was about ready to come back to the Home of the Brave when I run into a big English boxin' promoter up at the National Sportin' Club's fights one night. This bird had a concession to put on a mill at no less than Monte Carlo, and by the end of the week I have put up a five-thousand-buck appearance forfeit and signed the Kid to meet anybody the promoter selected for a twenty-round argument at roulette's home town within a month. We was guaranteed twenty thousand iron men and two round-trip tickets, with a privilege of 35 per cent of the gross. Pretty soft, hey?

When I got back to our hut after signin' the articles I found the Kid conspicuous by his absence, so I sit down to look at a bunch of them illustrated sportin' papers without which no American barber shop is properly equipped and which had just been sent to me from home. The first thing that strikes me is how things has changed with the regard to the ads which fills up the back pages. They used to be whole columns of stuff like "Drink Habit Cured with One Dose!" and "Send Us a Buck and We'll Make Him Sober!" but now it's all different. The advertisements which greets the eye these days is: "Own Your Own Still! Complete Brewery, $2," and "Make Your Hooch at Home and Giggle at Prohibition. 3,000 Sure-Fire Recipes, One Case Note!"

Suddenly there is a rap at the door, and I extended the courtesies of our boudoir in a loud but friendly

voice. Said door opens, and allows a tall, thin guy of about thirty autumns to ease into the room, remove a pair of yellow gloves, and regard me with a cold and fishy eye. He's wearin' a pair of glasses which looks like spare rims for a flivver, and was dressed in wh.. was like as not the height of fashion somewheres, only I don't know where. A gold-headed cane completes the layout. His openin' remark is a cough. I easily ducked that, and he followed it up with: "As I understand it, I am speaking to the—er—ah—manager of Kane Halli—of Kid Roberts?"

"You are awarded the chiffon ice pick!" I says. "What of it?"

"May I sit down for a moment?" he remarks, glancin' about the room and lettin' forth a slight shudder when he sees the forty-six colored bath robe I had bought for the Kid.

"What d'ye want?" I hollers pleasantly. "Get to the point and be done with it!"

He presents me with a frown and slides into a chair. "I shall get to the point, you may rest assured," he says. "I am a—ah—a friend of Hall—of Kid Roberts, and I have some information to impart to him that—ah—that is so vital to his future welfare that, in order to deliver it to him personally, I have missed my boat connections to Paris."

"That's tough!" I says. "What d'ye want *me* to do—bust into sobs? The Kid ain't here. Tell me the bad news, and I'll slip it to him the second he comes in."

"That is impossible!" he says, very chilly. "If you are really a—ah—a friend of Roberts, you will find him for me at once!"

A *Universal Production.* *The Leather Pushers.*

THE KID TELLS DOLORES THAT SHE IS THE MOST WONDERFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD, WHILE MARJORY LOOKS ON.

I got up and looked him over, and he leans back in the chair and begins to tap one hand in the palm of the other and gaze out the window at the city of London. So I put my hat on the place I bought it for and started for the door.

"Who shall I say is seekin' him?" I asks, hesitatin'.

The mysterious stranger turns loose a yawn, reaches into a side pocket, and hands me a card, on which, from the feel to the naked hand, the letters is raised a foot high. Naturally I glanced at it. It says the followin':

AUGUSTUS ROBERTSON-CARROWSMITH, 3D.

Sweet Mamma!

"So you're a infielder, hey?" I remarks courteously.

A icy eyebrow goes up. "Beg pardon?" he says.

I waved the card at him. "It says on this you play third, don't it?" I explains.

"Will you be good enough to get Mister—eh—Roberts at once?" he snorts, and gimme a splendid view of his back.

By dumb luck I run into the Kid in the hotel lobby, so I slipped him the card this guy gimme. A short look is all that's needed to make the Kid's naturally fair complexion seven shades lighter and sends his eyebrows into a hard, straight line. He crams the card into his pocket like he wanted to shove it all the ways through, and then follows me into the elevator without a word.

When we stepped into our room Mister Agustus Robertson-Carrowsmith, 3d, got up at once and shoved his hand out to the Kid, which was lookin' him up and down very stern and cold.

"Well, Halliday," says Augustus, "I suppose you must guess the purpose of my visit."

"I haven't the slightest idea why I am so honored," answers the Kid, payin' everything but attention to the other guy's outstreched hand. "Make this interview as brief as possible, Carrowsmith!"

Friend Augustus registers what is known far and wide as a blush. "May we have—ah—privacy?" he inquires, with a slight nod at me.

"Say anything you have to say before this gentleman," snaps the Kid. "Only say it quickly!"

"Very well," bows Augustus, 3d, turnin' his back to me to show his cordiality. "Halliday, I have discovered that you are masquerading under the name of —ah—Kid Roberts, and that—you will pardon me, but I must be plain—and that you are a—ah—a common prize fighter!"

"Well?" says the Kid, foldin' his arms and as cold as a icicle.

This here didn't seem to be just what Augustus had expected. I think he figured on creatin' a sensation at the least. However, he bucked up and went on: "I have come to—ah—to offer you a position with us as—as—ah—well, I am sure father will find something for you to do at—ah—at a nominal salary until you—ah—rehabilitate yourself. In a word, I have come to save you from the humiliating position you have—ah—fallen into through your father's unfortunate—ah—failure. I—"

"Save your breath," the Kid cuts him off. "I am perfectly content as I am!"

"Content!" gasps Augustus, throwin' up his hands and rollin' his eyes to the ceilin'. "Gad, man—are you insane? Kane Halliday a *prize fighter!* Think if this should become public property—why, damn it, man, you've *got* to stop this degrading thing! You owe it to your friends, your college, your—"

"Stop!" roars the Kid, his face whiter than the color itself. "How dare you come here and patronize me, you hound! Your father and his gang of legalized cutthroats stripped me and mine to the bone—picked us up, broke us in bits, and threw us away. Took advantage of friendship, trust, and what none but criminals would call opportunity to ruin us, and *you* dare to offer me an underling's job where I probably would be getting my weekly pittance from the money you wrung from my own father! I owe nothing to my friends—I have no friends—they scurried away like the rats they were from the sinking ship of my father's fortunes. As to my college, it should be proud of me. At least, it didn't turn out a quitter! I took my medicine and I'm making good now on my own. It'll be a long climb back, but I'll get there, Carrowsmith, and when I get there I'll get *you.* Now go, or I'll further shock your damned hypocritical dignity by throwing you out of my room!"

Augustus gasped, give a shiver, and tried to make a dignified exit. He failed.

The Kid takes out a handkerchief and wipes his hands carefully, though he hadn't touched this bird

at all. Then he glances at his watch and whistles. "Hurry up and get into your evening clothes," he barks at me, startin' the water in the bathtub and commencin' to strip. "We're going up to the Savoy, where some of the bunch who were in my class at Yale, and happen to be here, are giving me a little dinner to celebrate my approaching contest with the world's champion."

"*Yale* guys?" I says. "Why, what tha—why, I thought all them old Elis was off you for life since you become a leather pusher?"

"Why?" inquires the Kid. "Because that little rotter Carrowsmith came here and upbraided me?" He curls his lip. "Don't be an ass! Carrowsmith no more represents the real college spirit than a mongrel hound, for instance, represents the spirit of the blooded dog."

"All right, all right," I cuts him off, "go ahead. I'm glad to hear them babies is regular guys—but where do *I* fit in this here party?"

"Whither I goest, thou goest!" laughs the Kid. "As my friend and manager, you'll be as welcome as I'll be. Come on, snap into it—you have just about time to shave."

"Nothin' stirrin'!" I says. "I belong at a Yale dinner the same way I belong in the White House! My grammar would never stand up under the strain of bein' allowed to roam wild among a lot of cuckoos with F. O. B., B. A., I. E., and the like tacked after their names."

"Come on!" he grins, givin' me what he prob'ly figured was a playful push and which flopped me on top of the bed. "Don't be a crape hanger *all* your life. These boys are regular fellows. I know you're going to like them, and they're going to like you!"

And, gentle reader, such turned out to be the case. They was half a dozen of them boola-boola birds on hand, most of 'em sons of guys which has $160 for every mongolian in Shanghai, and they all checked up as aces. Anyways you want to look at it, a beaucoup time was had by all with a *real* gang, and if by some odd coincidence I ever get wed I will ship the plurality of my children to the handiest college, if only for the chance they'll get therein to be regular when they come out!

How the so ever, we met somebody at this dinner which come near costin' Kid Roberts his chance at the world's heavyweight title, about a quarter of a million bucks, and Dolores Brewster. This somebody was the only scrapper in the world I conceded could put Kid Roberts down for the long count. Could trim him without gettin' warmed up and could trim him to the Queen's taste. Here was a battler which had took 'em all on, regardless of weight, age, color or distance, knocked 'em all kickin', and had never had a scrap that was even *close!* They all turned into set-ups when they went to the post with this battle-scarred veteran. Why, to give you a idea of just how tough this baby is, they won't even let him fight in America no more! The guy I have reference to is Jack Barleycorn.

Well, Kid Roberts never done nothin' by halves—he never *outpointed* no guys, he knocked 'em *cold*—and the next mornin' I catch him orderin' brandy and soda from a bell hop, and he ain't been out of bed five minutes. I give the bell hop the air, and when the Kid banged out of the room a half hour later we was both hoarse, and he had swore that his scrap at Monte Carlo

was his last under my management. Still in that humor, he called on Miss Dolores Brewster and managed to get himself in wrong with her. This released the last brake the Kid had on himself, and when I fin'ly dug him up at midnight in a extry swell Piccadilly booze emporium he was buyin' for one and all, and if W. J. Bryan had seen the shape he was in he'd of bust out cryin'. A young army officer which had trailed around with the Kid all night told me they had been gave the raspberry at the Carlton when the Kid climbed up on the bar, announced himself as the only son of Old King Cole, and demanded that a covey of fiddlers be sent to him at once.

Kid Roberts opens a watery eye about noon the next day, drinks between four and twenty-one gallons of ice water, and apologizes to the world at large. He listens to my bawlin' out in silence whilst shavin', and then he sit down and wrote about ninety telegrams to Miss Dolores Brewster, sendin' one. They was no answer, and fin'ly, by the via of the telephone, he found out that Dolores and her dad had gone to Paris, leavin' no word for him what the so ever.

From then on I had my hands full keepin' this big kid within the bounds of reason and away from the festive brew. I give him lectures which would of got me thirty solid weeks on any Chautauqua circuit in the world, and I endeavored to keep right on his back from the time the alarm clock made good in the mornin' till we set the thing at night. But there was times when he managed to slip away, and by the day we hit Monte Carlo, with the battle less than a week off, constant cigarette

smokin' had ruined his wind, he was flabby and out of condition, and he didn't give a trout's foot whether he fought Gournet, the guy the English promoter had picked to meet him, or not.

I knew that Dolores Brewster's father would be at the ringside, because the old guy was a blown-in-the-flask fight bug and had promised the Kid he would be there, after seein' him flatten the English champ a few weeks before. Whilst talkin' to us after that brawl Senator Brewster had also let fall the information that he always stopped at the Hotel Crillon when in the city which added "oo-la-la" to our language. So, in a loud and desperate voice I called on a woman for help for the first time in my life. I sit down and wrote a long letter to Miss Dolores Brewster, tellin' her that since her and the Kid fell out he was goin' to Gehenna at a speed which would make a nervous greyhound look like a crippled snail. I explained just what he was doin', just what was at stake, and that I was playin' her as my last card. I also worked in the fact that unless Kid Roberts pulled himself together at once, this French battler would murder him, and the disgrace would bury him, addin' that the Kid's future was in her hands and that a mere note from her with a couple of "dears" and a few mentions of the preposition "love" in it would make everything Jake.

I mailed the above to the Hotel Crillon and give myself up to the art of wishin'.

Well, I run a dead heat with Aladdin, and he had a lamp. The day of the bout no less than Dolores Brewster breezed into Monte Carlo herself! This was beyond

my wildest nightmares, and I was over to the hotel she phoned me from in one runnin' jump. In the lobby I bump into "Honest Joe" Hammond, which, with a bunch of other globe-trotters in his line, is makin' book on the fight.

"What about this muss?" he says, pullin' me aside before I can duck him. "I'm layin' three to one Roberts cops, but I'm gettin' a big play from some American and English jobbies on this Gournet guy. It don't sound reasonable. Are you levelin' with the Kid in this one?"

"We level in all of 'em!" I says. "*You* see what's goin' on, and you know as much as I do. The Kid's gone cuckoo and ain't trained a day—that's the low down between you and me—but we have cooked nothin' up. Would I be liable to lay down to this Frog with a crack at the world's title in sight? The Kid ain't in condition, but—"

"I don't care if he's on crutches!" butts in "Honest Joe." "If you're *tryin'*, that's all I wanna know. So far I'll go to the cleaners for sixty thousand men if Kid Roberts don't ash home in front. So you can see!"

I reached in my pocket and handed him a roll of fifteen one-thousand-buck notes, or "grands," as them addicted to slang calls 'em.

"Bet this for me, Joe," I says, "at them 3 to 1 odds you was talkin' about, and take 2 per cent of the loot for your commission. How 'bout that?"

"Honest Joe" merely scribbled a receipt, gimme it, grinned, and drifted away.

An hour later me and Miss Dolores Brewster is in the world's famous casino where every time the roulette wheel stops spinnin' somebody goes cuckoo

with either joy or grief. From all the reliable reports we can get, Kid Roberts is in there somewheres—six hours before he fights Monsieur Henri Gournet, heavyweight champion of France!

I planted Dolores Brewster in a little loungin' room off the big gamblin' saloon, whilst I shoved hithers and yon through the mob lookin' for the Kid. On my travels I pass to one side of a bird which looks terrible familiar, and in a second I got him pegged as no less than this Carrowsmith stiff which bawled the Kid out in London for bein' a pug. Him and a couple of French guys, all fairly well lit up, is chatterin' away and I was all set to eavesdrop a bit when I see Dolores makin' her way to the long roulette table in the middle of the big room.

I was beside the Kid's future bride when she pushed her way through the hysterical mob around the table to the back of the Kid's chair. Even the wildest of 'em give way for Dolores after one look, and I heard many's the gasp which the turn of the roulette wheel had nothin' to do with! At the right of the Kid was a bunch of hard-lookin' guys, leanin' almost on top of him, apparently watchin' his play and makin' cracks to each other in French. I didn't like the way they was lookin' at the Kid and then at each other, but I didn't get no chance to take that part of it up, because Dolores leaned right over the Kid and whispered somethin' in his ear.

For a instant he looked straight ahead with his eyes starin' open and his jaw droppin' like he couldn't believe his ears. Then he got slowly up, swung around,

and faced Dolores. There they stood lookin' at each other, like that crowded, buzzin' room was a deserted island and they had each discovered for the first time that they was somebody else on it. I noticed this Carrowsmith guy and his two pals pushin' through the outside fringe of the crowd, and the tough lookers which had been hangin' around the Kid's chair also seemed to be gettin' uncomfortably close. As I reached down to grab some of the Kid's winnin's, which he seemed to of lost all interest in, I remember feelin' a sudden chill.

Then comes the movie!

Dolores stepped back, motionin' for the Kid to follow, and in doin' so bumped squarely into Carrowsmith. This bimbo made no attempt to get out of her way, but stood there with one hand on her shoulder, grinnin' somethin' in her ear. At the same minute the Kid seen him for the first time, but the sneer of recognition was wiped off his features when Dolores drawed back, her skin flamin', and slapped Carrowsmith in the face. The two guys with him, grabbin' her arms, begin to laugh, and then, with a hoarse snarl, the Kid dove through the mob sendin' 'em scatterin' right and left. The roughnecks immediately closed in after him, and one of 'em stuck out his foot but missed trippin' the Kid, when a chair caught him square in the back of the neck and closed his interest in the further proceedin's. I swing a mean chair!

The Kid's first rush landed him in front of Carrowsmith and his two stewed allies, and they went down so hard they was all cold sober when they hit the floor. The Kid wheeled and swung Dolores up on the roulette table, and. with his back to it, took the plunge

of the mob with his bare fists, pumpin' 'em back and forth as regular as a steam riveter and with about the same execution. Usin' what was left of a gilt chair as a persuader, I worked my way to him, layin' about me right merrily. I have been in some busy corners in my time, but for fifteen minutes of action and thrills the battle of Monte Carlo leads the league! It is safe to say that this gilded joint never staged nothin' like this before and never will no more—this here world's famous gamblin' palace, where when a guy ruins himself they give him a gat and ask him will he kindly step out in the garden before usin' it, so's not to muss up the place and disturb the other players. But, then, they never had no mob in there before like the Roberts-Gournet fight brung there either! Women begin to faint and scream respectively and perfect strangers fell to maulin' each other with a gusto. By the time the dinky little coppers with their trick swords was swarmin' into the place, the Kid and me, shieldin' Miss Dolores Brewster between us, walloped our way out a side door to the car I had brung her there in.

We dropped Miss Brewster a block from her hotel, so's that if the law was awaitin' us she wouldn't be mixed up in the thing. My idea, however, was that the gendarmes, havin' got to the Casino a trifle late for the big show, would have no idea who started the thing, and Gournet's merry men wouldn't tip 'em off because if we got pinched and couldn't fight they couldn't collect their bets. I had it about right.

We got up to our room without no trouble, except that we widened many a eye and caused a epidemic

of shoulder shruggin' among the inhabitants of the lobby as we crossed to the—eh—lift (foreign stuff). There is no question that we was a couple of tough-lookin' babies! Half of my suit was elsewhere. I didn't have no hat and I was featurin' a rapidly closin' left eye. The Kid looked like a new English copper after his first night patrollin' a beat in Cork. Both his hands was badly bruised and swollen, and in two or three hours he was goin' to climb into the ring against Monsieur Henri Gournet.

He never said a word from the time we left Miss Brewster till we got safely in our room. Then he walked up to the mirror and give himself a long once-over, lettin' forth a sigh that rattled the window shades.

"Cheer up, Kid," I says, slappin' him on a gory shoulder. "We have qualified as union movie heroes this afternoon! Look what we done—we bust up the gamblin' hell, rescued the fair damsel, knocked the villain for a row of ash cans, and to-night we—"

He throws off my arm and tears himself away from the glass.

"Let me alone. I feel like a beast!" he snarls, rippin' off what's left of his shirt and hurlin' it in a corner. "That hound Carrowsmith was right," he adds. "I *have* become degraded!" Whilst he's talkin' he jerks out the bottom drawer of the bureau and slams it on the floor. "Here," he growls, "have a porter come up and clean out this mess!" The next minute he's in the bathroom under the shower.

"This mess" was several bottles of hooch which had been the Kid's travelin' companions for his brief tour as Young King Cole. That was the first and last time

the Kid hit up the red-eye whilst I had him, and after all he'd done he was entitled to *one* joy ride—hey?

We got down to the arena where the slaughter was staged and into the ring about ten that night without no trouble from the police. The crowd was no bigger than the population of Nebraska, only more mixed, and when they seen the Kid's somewhat battered appearance as he climbed shakily through the ropes there was quite a shout went up. The French champ looked twenty pounds heavier than the clean-muscled Kid, and was covered with fur like a grizzly. I walked right over to him and shoved through his handlers.

"Lafayette, we are here!" I remarks. "Them gunmen of yours failed to cook us this afternoon, and we aim to square up with you in the next couple of rounds. Don't try no tricks to-night, Frog, or—"

"Je ne comprends pas, monsieur!" he butts in.

"Try it and I'll murder you!" I says, and turns my attention to the Kid.

He needed it. He was shaky and used up from the afternoon's mêlée, disgusted with himself for lettin' the beautiful Dolores see him in that rough and tumble, and the hostile, foreign crowd was shootin' his nerves to pieces. He wanted the thing over with, and he glared across the ring at Henri Gournet till friend Henri begin lickin' his lips and turnin' his face the other way.

The French referee was as excited as a bride lookin' up time-tables for her first honeymoon trip, and he must of learned the English language from a ouija board, because all he knowed was "Yes" and "No." I hadn't the faintest idea of what his intructions was, and the next minute the party is on.

It was easy to see before they had exchanged a half dozen blows that the Kid carried the heavier guns, but Gournet, like most of them foreign scrappers which gets anywheres, was a boxer rather than a slugger. He was satisfied to carry on the battle at long range and outpoint his man, whereas and to wit the Kid wanted to end it with a punch and took a dozen wallops without seemin'ly tryin' to duck 'em in order to land one crusher. He chased his man all over the ring, but the Frog was clever and kept slidin' along the ropes, keepin' the Kid off balance with a very sweet straight left that pecked at the edges of the Kid's unhealed wounds of the afternoon and opened 'em up. The mob was yellin' for the Frenchman to take a chance and stand up to the Kid, but Gournet turned a deaf ear to their entreaties and continued to back pedal, jab, and clinch whenever the Kid shook him up. Kid Roberts was as wild as a infuriated tiger and missed a dozen haymakers, each miss makin' him wilder and all of which tickled the mob silly. Toward the end of the round he fin'ly connected with a savage right to the body and Gournet's grunt could be distinctly heard in South Wales. His knees sagged and he dove wildly into a clinch, but the Kid shook him off with a grin and drove him against the ropes with a left to the jaw, one inch too high or that would of been the wind-up. Quick as a flash the Kid was on top of him, suddenly cool and unhurried as he measured him with a light left and prepared to smash over the sleep producer. Gournet suddenly stuck a feeble left in the Kid's face. They was no steam at all behind the punch, yet the Kid staggered back, shook his head from side to side, and then was short by a foot

with both hands right at the bell, which could hardly be heard over the uproar which greeted the Frenchman's narrow escape.

The mob gave the Frog a ovation as he stumbled to his corner, and his seconds jumped in to give him a kiss! The Kid slumped down heavily on his stool and dug at his eyes with his gloves.

"You must have let some of that alcohol you rubbed me with get into my eyes, you fool!" he growls at me. "I can hardly see this fellow and they're smarting terribly. Wash my eyes out, quick!"

I pushed back his head and examined the glims in question. No wonder the Kid's judgment of distance had been way off. They was red-rimmed and bloodshot, and I bet they was painful! I put handlers on 'em with sponges soaked in ice water, and then I looked over to Gournet's corner—thinkin'. Bendin down fin'ly I sniffed at the Kid's eyes and in two jumps I was in the Frenchman's corner, divin' through his handlers and grabbin' up his gloves before them babies knowed what it was all about. One smell was ample.

That big stiff had soaked both his gloves in oil of mustard!

New? No! That one had whiskers on it when the one of puttin' lead in a glove was born. Can't be done! Why not? Who examines a fighter's gloves once the bout's under way? Any old-time scrapper or his pilot will grin with remembrance when he reads this. It's pulled quite frequently in the tall timbers to this day.

Well, the referee had rushed over after me to see what was the trouble and the coppers was havin' a merry time tryin' to keep the interested attendance out

of the ring. I immediately claimed the fight on a foul, and the English promoter, the referee, and Gournet's manager pulled clocks on me and gimme five seconds to get out of the ring. I danced around 'em, pointin' to the Frog's gloves and then to my handlers workin' over the Kid's eyes, but they was nothin' stirrin'. The promoter yells that we won't get a nickel if we don't fight, and he would also see that the authorities found out who started the fracas at the Casino.

At this point "Honest Joe" Hammond sticks his head under the ropes and begs me to go ahead and kill this Frenchman, otherwise him and his pals would be hit for more than seventy thousand bucks. In the midst of the argument the bell rung for the second round, and I hollered to the Kid to stay on his stool, at the same time wavin' my handlers down and steppin' outside the ropes myself so's this referee wouldn't disqualify us for me bein' in the ring. Gournet dances out to the center, smilin' at his friends, and the referee steps over to where Kid Roberts is still sittin' on his stool, half blinded and crazy with pain. He gives my boy one look and then, raisin' his arms, *begins countin' him out as he sit there.* I plowed my way around the mob to his corner, stood the perfectly legal count till the referee reached "nine," and then shoved the Kid flounderin' into the ring.

Instantly Gournet swung his right to the jaw, and the Kid crashed to the mat, rolled over on his stomach, and was up at eight, weavin' back and forth on his feet, one glove to his eye and gropin' for the Frenchman with the other like the blind man he was. The crowd had gone stark crazy, and I chewed my lips till the hot

blood run down my chin at the sight of this boy, which I'd brung within a foot of the world's championship, bein' slaughtered in cold blood by this third-rate, foul-fightin' Frog tramp. Again the Kid hit the mat from a hurricane of lefts and rights to the head, and again was on his feet before the fatal "ten," grabbin' the Frenchman around the body and holdin' on for his life. Wow! You should of heard that crowd! Gournet had now gone cuckoo himself at the prospect of knockin' out the wonderful Kid Roberts—a thing which never entered his head when he entered the ring. He chopped himself free and twice more floored Roberts, and I got a couple of towels ready to hurl in, with my heart busted into little pieces which seemed to clog up the blood in my veins! As I bunched up the towels, I stuck my head up under the lower rope where the Kid was on one knee at the count of "seven." His head come slowly around and he looked at me.

"Stay down, Kid—we're through here!" I bellers hoarsely, and raised my arm to throw in the rags and save the boy from what looked like downright murder.

He shakes his head, and with a last look at me deliberately *winks!*

He was raisin' himself to his other knee when "Honest Joe" tore the towels from my hand with what is known as a round oath. Kid Roberts got to his feet, stumbled around like a movie drunk, and started what looked like a last despairin' swing at Gournet's jaw. In his eagerness to get it over with, the Frenchman slipped to his knees rushin' in, and the blow just grazed his hair as he was goin' down. On the second the Kid reaches over and helps him to his feet, though he nearly

fell on him doin' it. *"J'en suis très fâché, mon ami!"* he pants with a crimson smile.

The Frenchman stops short with a look of absolute surprise on his face which would of been comical if the situation hadn't been what it was. The idea of this poor battered boob, which could scarcely see and which he had fouled from the go in, apologizin' for a plain accident seemed to paralyze him for a second. He faltered in his stride, unconsciously lowerin' his guard, and in that same second the Kid suddenly straightened up and crashed him face down on the gore-spattered canvas with a right hook to the button of the jaw. He never moved a muscle while the dazed referee counted him out—fifteen seconds, accordin' to "Honest Joe" Hammond's stop watch.

So that was *that!*

On the ways back to Paris I was busy balancin' our cash, and the Kid was talkin' to "Honest Joe," which seemed to have lost ten years of his age somewheres.

"—So when I found I couldn't see, with that oil of mustard biting at my eyes," the Kid was sayin', "I realized that I was in for a severe beating—that Gournet can hit!—unless I met that fellow at his own game, matched him trick for trick. Aside from the first knockdown in the second round, I wasn't floored! I took those falls deliberately to clear my head, to think, and incidentally to allow that stuff to evaporate from my eyes. I decided then to try a little—ah—psychology. I figured that a sudden, unexpected mental shock would momentarily halt the Frenchman's wild lunges —interrupt his thinking apparatus which was timing

his blows. So when he slipped I instantly seized that second to act. I helped him up, you remember, and apologized courteously and stood off, apparently waiting for him to recover his poise. That unexpected act had the desired effect. Astonished, he hung fire and—well, I knew if I ever landed a solid punch he was whipped!"

"Ehheh," says Joe. "Well, that's fine—fine business. But if I was you, boy, I wouldn't draw them finishes so close hereafter!" He mops his brow with a handkerchief. "Did you not get up from that stool, they would of took me down the line for about seventy thousand fish! As it lays, I win twenty-eight thousand on the fight. I took ten thousand even from one guy alone."

"Who was that hick?" I asks, from idle curiosity.

"It's a funny thing," says Joe. "This dumb-bell didn't even see the quarrel. He was the guy which tried to wreck the Casino to-day, y'know, and it seems he got pinched. He gimme his card—" Joe searches his vest and pulls out a pasteboard. "Here it is," he says. "His name's Carrowsmith and—what are you guys laughin' at?"

ROUND EIGHT

HE RAISED KANE

Amongst the various gents which baffles the almshouse by the via of boxin', there is one baby which is seldom the hero of any prize-ring movies, plays, or novels, yet this guy is as important to the box fighter as his arms. I refer to the coatless, shirtless, hoarse, and perspirin' custodian of the water bucket, sponge, and towels, the Gunga Din of fistiana, i. e., the second or "handler."

From the time the jovial David knocked the genial Goliath for a goal, pugilistic history is dotted with the names of famous seconds whose shrewdness, swift thinkin', imagination, and remarkable knowledge of ring craft has saved many's the totterin' champ from a violent and sudden partin' with his title. Again, poor advice at a critical minute from a excited handler has sent scores of inexperienced young scrappers rushin' off their stools into a knockout, when skillful instructions might of landed them home a sensational winner. The next time you go to a professional aggravated assault and battery séance and get sick of watchin' a couple of them tired business men cuffin' each other, shift a eye over to their corners and watch their handlers work. The ones which

jumps up and down beside the ropes, shuttin' off the view of guys which has sent in from five to twenty berries for a look, and keeps up a continued screechin' of: "Go on, kid, knock him kickin'!" "Bring up the left, you saphead! Bring it *up!*" "Kill the big tramp!" and the etc., is as big a handicap to their man as tonsillitis would be to Galli-Curci. When the fighter can hear their bellers at all over the roar of the gore-hungry mob, it irritates and confuses him, especially when one of his seconds is yellin' for him to shoot his left and another is bawlin': "Send in 'at right!"

That type of second don't mean nothin' and is a heavy liability to a scrapper. But the other kind, these babies which has made the handlin' of fighters a science, is worth their weight in rubies, and if paid on the basis of their actual value durin' a tough battle, would get half their man's share of the purse at the least. You seldom see *them* birds hoppin' hithers and yon and shriekin' their heads off whilst their man is in there tryin'. You'll notice they crouch as close to the ropes as the referee will let 'em and when their boy gets puzzled and flicks his head to 'em for advice, they got a intelligent answer to shout him, some crafty move to recommend which usually gets the dazed mauler out of a tough hole.

This gent earns his sugar in the rest *between* rounds, not whilst his boy is mixin' it up and compelled to give his charmin' opponent his undivided attention. All durin' the round the big-league handler glues his eyes on the fighters and his brain is workin' faster than the pumpin' arms of the pantin' bruisers. He picks out the most glarin' weaknesses of his boy

and also those of the other bozo; he gets angles and sees chances to cop quick that the battler can't see whilst he's desperately tryin' to land his haymaker or keep himself from kissin' the canvas. He dumps out his entire bag of tricks, collected in years of "bein' behind" scrappers—champs and tramps. He pulls stuff that just stops at bustin' what rules the game has and frequently even knocks over the traffic sign. For instance, a beller about the other cuckoo's gloves bein' too light and a demand that they be examined. He knows said gloves are O. K., but if he can get away with it, the ensuin' argument with the referee may hold up the fight for even three minutes, enough to give his battered scrapper a chance to recover. When his boy flops on the stool at the end of a hectic frame, watch him pour a continuous cool and unexcited stream of advice into the kid's crimson ear as he bends over him and kneads the quiverin' body muscles. Advice that's the result of expert sizin' up of what's happened in the round just fought: "Don't try to *box* with this guy, keep sloughin' him all the way. Pound his heart, he don't like 'em there!" or: "Keep this boob movin'; don't let him set—get me? Spar him off this frame. Make him miss and tire him out. We'll knock him dead a little while later. Don't slug with him till I tell you!" and so forth, till the bell sounds and the kid steps out again, freshened up, clear-headed and confident.

I said before that inexperienced seconds is a big handicap to a box fighter. Yet Kid Roberts, licked to a fare-thee-well, sprang from his stool and win a world's championship solely on the account of the two guys which was shakin' the towel in his corner

—two guys which had never before in their lives handled a fighter and never did again. Let's go!

After we have bounced the French title holder at Monte Carlo, all the other foreign leather pushers it would have been worth our while to mingle with claimed exemption. The Senator and his eye-soothin' daughter havin' concluded their business abroad, i. e., havin' a whale of a time, is ready to sail for America, and of course the Kid immediately develops a terrible yearnin' for his native heath. So the result was that we all sailed for the Gem of the Ocean together. The Kid and Dolores went into secret conferences on the novel subject of love's young dream, which lasted till we slid past Quarantine and me and the Senator become familiar figures in the smokin' room, talkin' each other silly on subjects from boxin' to bankin' and politics to parcheesi.

Just before we tied up at the dock we all separated so's to fool the ship-news reporters, which surrounded the Senator whilst the camera boys was shootin' the smilin' Dolores from all angles. Three feet away, with his broad back to 'em, stood the Kid, and I kept wonderin' how much the newspaper guys would give to know that the best story they'd fell across in many's the day was right under their noses. Dolores Brewster, society bud, only daughter of millionaire Senator Brewster of New York, engaged to Kid Roberts, heavyweight championship challenger. Woof—Sweet Mamma!

Then a reporter seen the Kid, and in a instant a United States Senator was left flat on his back right

in the middle of lettin' forth a opinion on Russia or somethin' equally as enthrallin', whilst the reporters and camera men swooped down on the grinnin' Kid and bombarded him with foolish questions. I stood by beamin' and smirkin' like a mother watchin' her boy wonder recitin' the twelve o'clock ride of Paul Revere to the school board. Then come the jolt!

"Well, Kid," says a sharp-eyed little runt from the "Evenin' Moan," "what are you gonna do about Dynamite Jackson?"

"Prob'ly play him philately," I says, before the Kid can answer. "Who the—eh—who's Dynamite Johnson?"

"Not *Johnson,*" says the reporter. "Jackson—Dynamite Jackson. He's a gentleman of color, and the color ain't white! Whilst you and your man-eater has been frolickin' around Europe, this big dinge has come up from nowheres and made a name for himself around New York. He flattened Tiger Anderson, Bull Kelly, Jim Sewell, and Young Scavelli in one round the each, and he smacked Soldier Martin for a row of shanties last night in just six frames! Whitey Burns, which has the Arena Club in Newark now, stands ready to offer you $55,000 for your end, win, lose, or draw for eight rounds, no decision. Why, say, the mob which will turn out to see this—"

"That's all blah!" I cuts him off. "We never fought no dinge, and we never will!"

"Now look here, fellah!" he snarls, shovin' his sharp little face up to me "this nigger should have his chance. If you duck him, I will personally roast your man to a fare-thee-well, beginnin' with to-morrow's

paper. Every white man in this village and in hundreds of others which reads the papers, and has heard of both Kid Roberts and Dynamite Jackson, is hopin' you'll take this high-steppin' dinge and knock him dead. I hope you kill him! But if you don't take him on—"

"Just a moment!" butts in the Kid, which ain't batted a eye durin' all of this. "I'm afraid you're exciting yourself unduly, old man. When I first went into this game, I made up my mind that under no circumstances would I ever step into a ring with a colored man. Never mind my reasons—they're ethical and my own. But your contention is absolutely right. A *real* champion should bar *no* one, whether it be a contest of brains or brawn! It is my place as challenger to prove beyond a question of a doubt that I am of championship caliber. Very well, I will meet this negro, as far as I'm concerned—to-morrow night!"

Wam!

"Look here, you guys—" I hollers, whilst the reporters is tryin' to mob the Kid and a little bimbo as large as a chicken and with the same kind of a chest is struttin' around and bellerin' about the undaunted white race to a big fat grinnin' Senegambian porter, "I—"

"Shut up, Stupid!" grunts the reporter from the "Evenin' Moan," "or I'll start a conspiracy to keep your name out of the papers. The Kid's the guy I should of talked to in the first place. How a real fighter ever got tied up with a burglar like you is past me! This boy has got to where he is on sheer courage and his own nut. The first time he takes

one syllable of advice from you, he'll become a bum!"

Well, as the French says: *"Kappa Delta Omega Tau!"* hey?

The Kid didn't fight Dynamite Jackson the next night, but they did crawl through the ropes before either ten or thirty-six thousand maniacs about two weeks later. I'll say this Ethiopium was good! For three rounds he toyed with the cautious Roberts till none of the crowd could speak above a whisper and most of 'em wanted the Kid's life. In Round Four, under my orders, the Kid took off the wraps and murdered all the bugs with weak hearts by droppin' Jackson twice. In Round Five they stalled some more and drawed a hat and program shower from the cuckoos in the gallery. The sixth innin' was a wow! They both come out to end it with a punch, and, boy, it was pretty. Both could hit and both could take it, and that's what happened. This dinge fought like his life depended on every wallop, and right at the bell he connected with a terrific smash to the body that floored the Kid in his own corner. It took some scientific work to bring him around, and when he opened his eyes he pushed me away from the reddened side I was anxiously kneadin'. His face was a pasty gray.

"Don't rub that, you ass," he groans through set teeth. "He's broken one of my ribs!"

O sole mio!

I motioned for the referee.

"If you stop this, I'll kill you!" snarls Roberts,

and he looked it as he sneers out at the ravin' crowd. "Look at the damn beasts!" he grunts. "Listen to them. The blood lust! Look at that fellow's face." He pushes my head around to lamp a fat, putty-faced guy—collar gone, eyes poppin' from his head, and perspiration pourin' off him in streams, who's mouthin':

"The big bum's yellah; the nigger'll kill him!" over and over like a chant. "And I have to perform for that animal!" groans the Kid, writhin' in agony and talkin' half to himself now. "Damn that nigger—is this, then, the end after those two years of hell? Keep that fool away from my side with his oil, I—"

The bell rung.

Dynamite Jackson would of won then and there if he'd of known the damage he'd already done. But he didn't, for the Kid was grinnin' at him coldly and pokin' out his marvelous left. The dinge looked the picture of confidence and swung his head for a wise crack to his corner. I bet they've trained him out of doin' that again! As his bullet head flicked aside, Roberts whipped both arms over like twin snakes, and —woof—how it must of hurt him to straighten up! The left took Jackson on the chin, and as he sagged forward the right—oh, that sweet right!—thudded home over the heart and, brother, no man—not Jackson, not Samson—could of taken them two clean smashes and remained upright.

The Kid never looked back at him, but staggered over into my arms. Oh, sure, the rib was busted all right, and I'd paged a medico when he left his stool. We left Dynamite Jackson with the howlin' lunatics. He was out half a hour, and we nearly got pinched.

So that was *that*.

The Kid's sensational win over Dynamite removed the last barrier between us and the mill with the champ, but that clout in the ribs gummed up the works a bit. Some X-ray stills of the thing showed a nasty fracture, and the best bonesetter in New York claims it would be suicide for the boy to enter a ring inside of three months. However, I cheered up and made the best of it, figurin' that the long rest would do the Kid good, as I didn't want him drawn too fine from too much work. Three months' lay-up would also ease the strain on his nerves and give him a chance to put on weight—not fat—for the champ, which scaled around 215 ringside to the Kid's 195.

They was little hagglin' over signin' the articles, three weeks later. Twenty-five rounds to a decision was fin'ly agreed on as the distance, and I captured the champ's goat early by remarkin' that two rounds would be ample. The king of the heavyweights demanded $125,000, win, lose, draw, or earthquake, and Jimmy Brandt, the promoter, which had come prepared to give him twice that and throw in Grant's Tomb if necessary, kidded the big boob into fin'ly acceptin' $110,000. When it come to dealin' with us, they was even less bargainin'. Me and Brandt had got that all set a week before, viz., $30,000 guarantee, $10,000 trainin' expenses, and 33 1-3 of the movie rights. These last can be showed in Europe, South America, and the like, and if the massacre goes long enough is worth more than you think.

Well, after I have put up a ten-thousand-buck ap-

pearance forfeit, swore that Kid Roberts would box no more till he met the champ, and agreed to start trainin' on the scene of the battle a month before the clash, the champ poses for some newspaper stills with the Kid, and we're all set. Roberts dashed off to the fair Dolores, figurin' her half dead from lonesomeness, as he hadn't seen her for about a hour, whilst I spent a pleasant afternoon signin' movie and vaudeville contracts for the Kid, to go into effect immediately after the championship battle and to have a value of nothin' unless the Kid finished exactly first in that fracas. Then I grabbed a rattler for the wilds of Maine, where me and my athlete was goin' to hunt and fish and fish and hunt till a month before the big fight.

One of them Yale pals of the Kid's had nothin' less than a shootin' box up there, and he wouldn't have it no other way but that me and Roberts consider it our home till we got ready to go into heavy trainin'. So I went up ahead to get my hands on a couple of guides and the etc., with the Kid due to join me in a week.

Well, boys and girls, one fatal night I was sittin' in a easy-chair before a roarin' log fire, enjoyin' the art of smokin' and readin' "The Life of Napoleon," and thinkin' how many ways me and Napoleon was like each other—and there comes a knockin' on my chamber door, as Eddie Poe, the Raven, used to say.

The next minute I am enjoyin' all the delightful sensations of havin' stopped one of the Kid's hooks with my chin, as a result of havin' just read one of the world's greatest short stories, i. e., a telegram. Here it is:

Take next train New York Meet me Yale Club All plans upset. ROBERTS.

Sweet Papa!

Well, I again had the sensations of feelin' like Napoleon, only this time I felt like the well-known army man must of felt durin' the last half of the ninth at Waterloo. . . .

When I fin'ly get past the doorkeeper at the Yale Club, the Kid is pacin' back and forth in the lobby and the minute he flashed me he dragged me into a little room at one side. His twitchin' lips showed me where his nerves was.

"Now what the Gehenna's the—" I begins.

"*Everything's* the matter," he butts in, finishin' for me. "Lower your voice, can't you? This is a gentlemen's club, not a gymnasium!" A yellow piece of paper is shoved under my eyes. "Read that and weep!" he says.

This one is a wireless, readin' thusly:

Arrive pier 49 North River Thursday noon Keep from newspapers Booked as R. H. Carson. . . J. A.

"Who's J. A.?" I says, handin' it back.

The Kid bends over and hisses in my ear, like a villain in the old-time gun operas which the movies killed off: "J. A. is J. A. Halliday—my father!"

"Well, that's fine!" I remarks pleasantly. "I'll be glad to meet the old gent. But what's this jam you're in now?"

He swung around on me, and for a instant I thought *he* was goin' to forget we was in a gentlemen's club and not no gymnasium.

"You—you—you colossal ass!" he busts out fin'ly.

"And I thought you might help me. Gad, what a mess!" he adds, slappin' the arms of his chair.

"Mess of what?" I says, torn between innocence and stupidity.

"I am glad we're not alone," snarls the Kid, after a long, bloodthirsty look, "or I'm sure I would assassinate you in cold blood! It is more than two years since I said good-by to my father. He left here proud in the assurance that I would uphold the best traditions of our family and make my name in the profession I had chosen—engineering. In all our correspondence I have avoided any reference to the fact that I am a pugilist, and from the amount of money I've been sending him he obviously thinks I'm a success, perhaps a nationally known authority on—"

"But the newspapers will be printin'—" I begins.

"Bosh!" says the Kid impatiently, "Kid Roberts will mean nothing to *him*. Besides, I doubt if he ever more than glances at a sporting page. He had written me three letters to the effect that he was coming back and, lacking a forward address, they were all held at the club here while we were in Europe. I just got them when I dropped in yesterday. Why, in his last letter he says he's coming to realize the culmination of his greatest hope, or words to that effect. Can't you see what that means? He's ready for his comeback! And to think—oh, don't sit there looking at me like a fool. Can't you suggest something?"

"Why not come clean with the old man and be done with it, Kid?" I says, after a minute. "They's worse things than bein' a leather pusher. You made a name for yourself, you got a bank roll, and you're level.

Why, say, they's thousands of good citizens which can reel off your ring record and measurements and don't even know the plot of the Constitution!"

"You don't understand," says the Kid, patiently. "Perhaps your philosophy is right, but it would be useless to attempt to convert my father, and the caste he represents, to it. He would simply consider that I had dishonored the name of Halliday and that his own son had made a mock of him. When he went on the rocks through the perfidy of his most trusted friends it broke his heart, but not his spirit. He took his gruel like a gentleman and pinned his hopes in me. He is not a young man, and this second shock might kill him. Kane Halliday, prize fighter!" The Kid gives a shiver. "Gad. I can see his face now!" He gets up and takes a turn around the room.

"Look here," I says, gettin' up myself. "For two years you've allowed your old man to think you was a dude when it come to civilly engineerin'. Now, then, whether you're a fighter or a plumber, the fact that you ain't what you claimed to be is what's goin' to hit the old man, ain't it? Sure! Therefore the thing is to make it look like you was a *beaucoup* civil engineer till you win the title. Then you can come clean, all will be forgiven, and no harm done! Get me?"

"But if—" says the Kid wildly.

"Shut up," I says. "This joint's a gentlemen's club and not no gymnasium! Now what we'll do is to hire a office somewheres. I can fix that up with any one of the Jersey promoters and we'll paint your name on the door, plaster the place with maps and whatever a civil engineer works with. Fine! You show that to

father and we got that all jake. When the time comes to start trainin' for the big fight, you got a heavy job on out of town, get me? Away we go. You knock the champ for a row of milk cans, come back, show the old man your movie and vaudeville contracts which runs over $175,000 for next year; tell him why you didn't confess all before, that you never fought under your real name, anyways, so that part's all right, and if he don't kiss and make up—"

But the Kid is dancin' around and huggin' me till the bell hops is wonderin' which one of them cheated and sold him a pint.

"Enough, enough!" he cackles. "Good Lord, man, give me credit for *some* imagination. That's my one chance, an appeal to dad's sense of humor—and he has one. Besides, your stunt probably isn't half as despicable as it sounds. After all, it's for dad, even if we are deceivin' him, and in the end I'll tell him the whole business, of course."

"Say," I says, "I bet if your father ever seen you mixin' it up he'd be yellin' his head off and become a fight bug for life! Them dignified guys is all alike. I know a supreme court judge which got throwed out of a movie theatre for gettin' the hystericals over Chaplin. C'mon, we got to work fast. Call up Miss Brewster and the Senator and wise 'em up, so's they don't innocently tip off your father that we're a couple of first-class liars!"

Like wire walkin', this here proved easier said than done. At the first blush, the delicious Dolores says they is nothin' stirrin' on stallin' old man Halliday as far as she is concerned; what kind of a person would

he think she was, etc., etc., and etc. Well, I devoted my talents to the Senator which had once told me to look him up any time he could do anything for me. The proposition landed sock on his funny bone, and between us we fin'ly captured Dolores. Dave Martin, a Newark fight promoter, rents us his office for a spell on the promise that we will box our first exhibition at his club if we trim the champ. We take all the stills of great and near great pugs off the walls and replace 'em with a entirely different kind of maps, blue prints, and stacks of novels on the gift of civil engineerin'. A gay young stenog is hired and put to work copyin' off the City Directory, after we have with some difficulty convinced her that we ain't crazy or that she ain't bein' led into a trap. Then we get "Kane Halliday, Civil Engineer," painted on the door, the Kid goes over to meet his dad, and I sit down in the office and wish us both luck.

After a while the Kid reaches me via phone and says father has arrove lookin' like two $500,000 bills, and he is goin' to take him to dinner at the Ritz. Dave Martin comes up later to get some papers from his safe and says they will be a openin' pretty soon down in his temporary office for a bright young stud-poker player, so I fled the joint myself. Before leavin' I told the dazed stenog to be sure and stay till 5 p. m., as I expected President Wilson, Caruso, Ty Cobb, Eva Tanguay, and the Prince of Wales for a conference.

The followin' day Kid Roberts brings his male parent over to Newark. The big, upstandin', dignified old boy was very sweet to me and I fell for him right away. A close-up of him and you could see where the

Kid got not only his heft but his class. He looks around the office approvin'ly, nods pleasantly to the charmin' stenog which is typin' seven letters I have dictated to myself, squats in a comfortable chair near a window and there he camps all through one of the most nerve-rackin' mornin's I have ever put in anywheres!

They was a million pugs and their managers which had to be shooed away and shut up without gettin' the old guy suspicious. Fin'ly at noon we had a excuse to go to lunch and the Kid seen that his dear old dad didn't come back afterward.

At last comes the time when we have to start West to begin trainin' for the big fight as per our contract. The Kid tells the old man at a dinner up at the Senator's palace one night that "business" will call him out of town for about a month. He says that this job's the biggest one he's undertaken yet and that if he puts it through successfully he'll be fixed for life, all of which is true. Then, he adds with a happy smile, Dolores is goin' to be his sweet young bride.

"Provided," smiles Dolores, with a breath-takin' blush, whilst the Senator and the Kid's old man is slappin' each other on the back—"provided you give up your present—ah—profession, Kane!"

The Kid begins to choke over his oysters, and his old gent looks up kinda puzzled.

"And why, Miss Brewster?" he says. "Why should Kane give up the profession of engineering? Surely it is an honorable one and he's been tremendously successful at it, hasn't he?"

Wam! Dolores win the celluloid fireman's hat, hey?

She flames red to her shoulder blades, stalls for a minute by takin' a drink of water, and then gamely faces the Kid's father with a innocent smile. "Why—why, I suppose you'll think me foolish, Mister Halliday," she stammers, fakin' it wonderfully. "But—er—engineering will keep Kane away from home so much that—"

It was the Kid's dad himself which come to her rescue with a boomin' laugh and a wink to the Senator, and that baby grabbed the chance to switch the talk to the Japanese question. So that was all settled!

We caught a midnight rattler that night, leavin' the Kid's old man with the Senator and Dolores where he was to stay as their guest till we come back.

Late in the afternoon of the day Kid Roberts was to go to the post for the world's heavyweight championship, I was walkin' down the main street of the burg the battle was staged in on my ways to meet Jimmy Brandt, which promoted the battle, for a final conference. The town was loaded to the guards with fight fans from all over the Land of the Free, and every incomin' train was dumpin' off hundreds more, which battled with each other to give the speculators anywheres from a hundred berries up for seats within telephone distance of the ring. They was not as much profit for the speculators in this as you'd think, as the boys was all workin' for the promoter on a straight salary. The Kid was takin' a nap at our camp guarded by no less than Dynamite Jackson, which I'd brung on at *beaucoup* expense to work out with the Kid durin' the last two weeks before the mill. The boy had

used up all the cheaper help long before. Passin' the lobby of the hotel on my ways back, I'm edging through the jam when out of a taxi piles a couple of guys which has a familiar look. Their backs is to me, but yet they's somethin' about the way one of 'em carries himself that sets me thinkin': I know this guy, who *is* he? And then as the bell hops run out for their suit cases, this bird turns around and I catch a good square view of his face.

Sweet Mamma—it was Kid Roberts' old man!

At the risk of 'em seein' me, I stopped dead not three feet away and took a good long look. When the other guy started up the steps, the thing was cinched. He was Senator Brewster.

I staggered up against a convenient lamp post and I'd of been there yet, I guess, if a copper hadn't come along and nudged me with his stick. "Take 'at booze away from here," he says. "They're watchin' me pretty clost!"

Still in a trance, I sidled into a taxi and beat it for the camp. Of course, I took it for granted that the old boy had been out to see Kid Roberts and prob'ly made a scene and the like, and I could imagine what shape the Kid was in by now. Think of it, to have a thing like this happen on the very brinks of a championship battle!

Dynamite Jackson is on guard outside the room where the Kid's sleepin', just like I'd left him. He greets me with a dazzlin', gold-toothed grin. "Can 'at white boy fight like he kin sleep," remarks Dynamite, noddin' to the door, "us handles a champeen by tonight!"

"You big black tramp!" I snarls. "What d'ye mean by lettin' anybody in to see the Kid this afternoon? Didn't I tell you—"

"How come?" butts in Dynamite, losin' his grin. "Ain't nobody been botherin' around heah, 'ceptin' yo' ownseff. Like y'all demands, I been settin' heah doin' a piece of readin', and they ain't been as much as a strange *breeze* come through 'at doah!"

The "piece of readin'" Dynamite meant was a account of his seven-round battle with Kid Roberts, clipped from a New York paper. He'd haul that clippin' out and grin over it fifty times a day.

Well, Dynamite convinced me that the Kid's old man hadn't paid his party call yet and once again I was able to resume breathin'. I never let the Kid know they was a thing out of the way, though he laughed his head off when I posted a guard at every entrance to the camp and even barred the newspaper bunch till we entered the ring that night.

The ring was pitched in a ball park, but it was summer, and the air was just right. When we crawled through the ropes and looked out over that roarin' ocean of bobbin' faces, it seemed to me like everybody in the world had turned out to see this scrap. Given a guess, I'd of said they was twenty-eight million guys there, but the official attendance was a scant 45,000. The movie lights overhead made the ring stand out in the surroundin' gloom as bright as a sunny day and blinded us till we got used to it. The Kid was cool and unsmilin', showin' nerves only by the shufflin' back and forth of his feet as he sat on his stool after bowin' to a two-minute ovation from the mob. He sat with

his eyes fastened on a spot on the floor and looked neither to the right or left whilst Dynamite and Knockout Burns rinsed his mouth and massaged him, and I repeated my instructions. I told him to go after the champ from the bell, carryin' the battle to him and keepin' him movin' too fast to set. I don't know whether he heard me or not. He kept mutterin' thank God his father couldn't see the next five minutes. I turned away my head and says nothin'.

A sudden, deafenin' din from the crowd told us the champ was on his way down the aisle, and in a few minutes he stepped through on the other side, waved a bandaged paw at the frantic mob, and walked over to our corner. I felt the Kid's muscles tense under my hand, but he didn't move or look up. The champ reaches down and examines the Kid's bandages, carefully and deliberately, but failed to get a rise out of him. I got one out of the champ, though.

" You can shake hands now if you want to," I says to him. "It'll be the last chance! We want to come out fightin' with the bell, O. K.?"

He shrugged his shoulders, but he stopped grinnin' at his friends and walked over to his corner after that.

The introductions and posin' for the newspaper and movie stills was soon over, and then with a final roar the mob drawed its breath and settled back, the telegraph instruments beatin' a steady tattoo. I just got down under the ropes with the bell.

The Kid was across the ring like a panther and on top of his man before the champ was clear of his

corner. They sparred cautiously for half a second, and then the Kid was short with a right to the head, the champ counterin' swiftly with a right and left to the body that brought a yell from the mob and a nervous grin from the Kid. The champ then tried to end matters with a punch and swung a vicious right for the jaw, but Roberts was gettin' cooler now and easily blocked it, puttin' both hands to the face and dancin' lightly away before the champ could set for a return. The customers begin yellin' for action, and the Kid obliged by drivin' the champ to the ropes with a volley of lefts and rights to the head that made the title holder dive into a clinch, where he hung on till the crowd booed him and the referee must of broke his arms tearin' 'em apart.

When they broke, the champ was bleedin' freely from a cut over his right eye and the Kid immediately made that the target for a beautiful left jab. The champion was mad now and took all kinds of chances to land a haymaker, but the Kid kept him off with his left, occasionally rippin' in that terrible right to the heart.

A second before the bell, however, the champ uncorked a right swing that landed flush on the Kid's jaw. It drove Roberts hard against the ropes, and on the rebound he fell into a wicked left to the body that dropped him to his knees. The crowd stood up, yellin' wildly, thinkin' the thing was over, but the Kid was up at "five," bangin' away with both hands and drivin' the astonished champ across the ring. The bell found them clinched in a neutral corner and Roberts run to his stool grinnin' and unmarked outside of a slight

swellin' on his jaw. The champ looked very tired, and durin' the rest the odds switched from eight to five, with the champ favorite, to even money.

The champion come out for the second round to get it over with, and after pumpin' three stiff lefts to the face without a return, shifted his attack to the body, which begin to show big red blotches over the Kid's bum rib. Roberts fin'ly untracked himself and sent the champ staggerin' back with a wicked right uppercut, followin' that with a left to the mouth that showered the champ's neck and shoulders with gore. The mob kept up a continual din that must of been heard in Egypt. Crazy with rage, the champ pumped in two rights that looked pretty low, and the referee cautioned him, but the Kid waved the official away and drove a terrific right to the champ's ribs and nearly knocked him through the ropes. It looked like the end, and the Kid drove the mob into several higher degrees of insanity by crashin' the champ to the canvas with a perfectly timed right hook to the jaw. He took "nine" and was in a bad way when he floundered to his feet and managed to clinch right in our corner.

Then come the most sensational thing I ever seen at a prize fight—the thing the newspapers give more space to than they did the fight! The champ has his back to me and the Kid is lookin' out at the crowd over his shoulder, tryin' to work loose and finish his man. Suddenly his face goes a dull white, and his eyes takes on a wild stare. His arms slowly slides down the champ's quiverin' back and he shivers, like they was a sudden draft. I jumped on the stool and looked into the crowd, followin' his own startled gaze, and I seen

his father, Dolores, and Senator Brewster sittin' in a ring-side box!

Even the newspaper guys is excited now, and the mob is jumpin' up and down yellin' "Fake!" when the champ slides away, deliberately measures the hypnotized Kid, and floors him with a right swing. The round had fifteen seconds to go, and I could of cheerfully murdered the Kid's old man then and there and taken the "chair" with pleasure! Gypped out of a world's championship! Over the moanin' of Dynamite Jackson I hear "nine!" from the referee and see the Kid strugglin' to his feet, reelin' about like a guy full of hooch. The sneerin' champ straightens him up with a left jab and then drops him again with another crashin' right. In the middle of the count which would of surely been the wind-up, the blessed bell rung.

We had to half carry the Kid to his chair, where he slumped over in a heap, his head saggin' forward on his neck like the same was broke. The referee walks over, takes a look, and gazes at me inquirin'ly. Before I can say anything, somebody grabs me by the shoulders and shoves me to one side, I hear familiar voices and see Senator Brewster and the Kid's old man, their blazin' white shirt fronts spattered with blood and water from the sponge Dynamite is wavin' at 'em, climbin' through the ropes. Like a flash, I sees a chance in a million to cop, so I shoved the Kid's dumbfounded handlers out of the ring. The old man is slappin' the Kid's face to bring him to. The Senator has emptied the water bucket over him and is now shovin' the ammonia bottle under his nose.

"Come on, son!" the old man's half shoutin', half cryin'. "It was my fault, I should not have come here, I know. But, oh, my boy, I wanted to see you win. Come on, it's dad—can you hear me? It's dad, Kane boy—go on and kill that fellow! Son—son—wake up!"

The Kid's glazed eyes began to clear, and he sees his old man. Senator Brewster, a sight for the movies, is rubbin' him with alcohol, and tears, get that, *tears*, is streamin' down his face. The Kid shudders and begins straightenin' up. "Dad," he says, "I—"

"Don't talk!" pants the old man, rubbin' his wrists. "I'll explain everything later. I want to see you a champion! Come on, son—see, your color's coming back now. Go out and win! Remember in that Harvard game when you were knocked out in the first few minutes of play and insisted on staying and—oh, son, come on—"

"Why, of course!" smiles the Kid, dazedly. "I know this is all a nightmare, but even in a dream I can whip this fellow! I—"

"You got eight seconds to get your man off his stool!" grunts the referee. "Wanna throw it up?"

"Ring the chimes," barks the Kid, "I'll be there!" He turns to his old man: "Dad, I would never have lied to you, but—"

"Who's them old guys?" says a newspaper bird to another one which has left his telegraph operator and is in our corner, drinkin' in every word.

"Well," says the other guy, grinnin', "I'll be on the street with it first anyhow, so I don't mind tellin'

you. One of 'em's Senator Brewster of New York and the other's old J. A. Halliday—Kid Roberts' father—and they're *handlin'* him, that's all!"

"Wow!" yells the first guy, "I don't give a damn *who* wins this scrap. Sweet Cookie—what a story!"

The bell clangs, and I shove the Senator and the Kid's old man out of the ring just in time. The champion's handlers is yellin' over the ropes to the referee and pointin' to our corner, but he don't pay no attention to 'em. The champ advanced smilin'ly, when a human cyclone struck him in mid ring. It was the first punch that he didn't expect that licked him, because the Kid put everything he had left in that—a right swing to the jaw that dumped the champ with a crash that sent up showers of dust from underneath the padded canvas. He pulled himself up by the ropes at "eight," shakin' his head to clear it and pawin' weakly at the dancin' Kid in front of him.

"Take your time, Kid!" I bellered, and the boy heard me over the roar of the crowd, for he nodded and coolly measured the totterin' champ with a light left before floorin' him again with a right to the button. Again the champ floundered to his feet—they called him yellah afterward, but I seen the fight!—and again the fast tirin' Kid dropped him, this time usin' both hands for the job.

The champ got to his knees, slid back, and fin'ly got up at "nine," and now the Kid stepped back and hollered to the beaten champ's seconds to throw in the sponge and save their man from further punishment. They hesitated and, with a dyin' effort, the champ

swung for the Kid's unprotected face, missed and sprawled full length on the mat, face down.

As he started to drag himself to his feet, a pitiful sight, the towel came hurtlin' into the ring from the other side, and Kid Roberts was heavyweight champion of the world!

The Kid's old man was talkin' behind the barred doors of the dressin' room, whilst the mob pounded outside.

"When I went to South America, son," he says, "I arranged with the Pinkerton agency to keep tabs on you. I knew the pitfalls and temptations that faced you when—when I went bankrupt and was forced to set you loose on your own. They've been sending me press clippings about you almost since I went away—why, Kane, the object of my trip here was to see you win the championship! When you did not immediately enlighten me, I decided to let you think I was fooled so that you could work out your problem in your own way. I—"

"Then," gasps the Kid, "I've been writing to you that—a—and you have known I was a prize fighter since—"

"Since your first professional fight, son, two years ago," smiles the old man, pattin' his shoulder. "Ahem!" he says, his eyes twinklin', "J. A. Halliday, father of the world's heavyweight champion—well, that's something!"

ROUND NINE

THE CHICKASHA BONE CRUSHER

LATELY you'll find a lot of women at prize fights. Some of 'em covers their white faces with their hands and devotes themselves to wishin' it was over, and some of 'em stamps their feet on the floor as excited as the hoarsely bellerin' stevedore on one side of 'em and the wheezin' corporation lawyer on the other, and hollers shrilly: "Knock him out! Knock him out!"

I ain't got the slightest intention of gettin' mixed up in no argument as to whether it's proper or no for a member of the adjoinin' sex to be a part of the yowlin', cussin' mob which watches one guy endeavor to knock another one stiff for pennies. In the first place, *anything* any Jane does is O. K. with me. In the second place, I know nothin' what the so ever about the girls except I am practically certain that if it wasn't for them we'd all be throwin' coconuts at each other in the tops of the trees to-day. But to get back to the original subject, the bloodiest prize fight I ever seen since I been pilotin' leather pushers was deliberately staged by a woman, because she hated the game. Sounds odd, hey? Well, listen!

After Kid Roberts, with me at the wheel, had win the world's heavyweight title, we tell the ambitious

young men which is clamorin' for first punch at the new monarch of the maulers that we have declared a armistice for a year at the smallest as far as vulgar fistycuffs is concerned. We have a movie agreement which would make the charmin' Mrs. Fairbanks raise her equally charmin' eyebrows and a circus contract runnin' into as beautiful figures as Ziegfeld ever seen. The circus portfolio comes first and calls for the appearance of the Kid twice the day durin' a tour of the country. He's down on the menu to punch the bag, pull the weights, skip rope, shadow-box and step a couple of frames with his sparrin' partners. The big wow at the finish is a offer to take on any man, woman, or child in the audience for three rounds.

At the time this round opens, Dolores had gone to Washington with her father, which had been suddenly called there as the Senate had decided to begin playin' practical jokes on the President again. Me and Kid Roberts with our kingly retinue was flittin' through the train-stops-on-signal-only burgs, knockin' the natives cold with our forty-minute demonstration that self-defense is not only a plea, but a art.

It was at a one-night stand in Chickasha, Oklahoma, that one Joe Kenny—the hero or villain of this yarn, whichever you like—first took a runnin' jump and dove into the spotlight. Followin' the "amazin'ly agile acrobats" and the "extryordinarily educated elephants," the cheaper help was chased out of the arena, givin' Kid Roberts the place to himself. In the middle one of the three big circles a regulation ring was swiftly throwed together before the eager eyes of the awed customers, the tent lights was all dimmed, and a blindin'

calcium was throwed on said ring. Then a special announcer begin a long debate with himself which was mostly blah blah, and wound up with: ". . . and now, ladees and gent-tel-men, I have the great pleasure of intreeducin' to you one and all the most scientific, polished, gamest, and hardest hittin' exponent of the manly art of self-defense that the American prize ring has ever preeduced [the cheerin' usually begin about here]—the world's champeen heavyweight boxer, KID ROBERTS!"

Whilst the band played "Dixie" on account of the Kid bein' a born New Yorker, and the mob went hysterical by a large majority, Roberts, caparisoned in a dazzlin' dress suit, circled the arena twice standin' up in the back of a auto liftin' his hat and bowin' this way and that.

Followin' a exhibition of trainin' stunts which was eat up by the natives, the Kid went two snappy rounds apiece with his sparrin' partners, a good dinge heavy correctly called Dynamite Jackson and Knockout Burns, a tough old war horse. Then whilst the mob, which has just seen enough to set 'em deleerious, is howlin' their heads off, the announcer holds up both hands for silence, grabs up his megaphone, and tells the world that Kid Roberts will box three rounds with anybody in the tent outside of the elephants, usin' ten-ounce gloves, which is the same as pillows, to four-ounce mitts for his darin' opponent. In his hand the announcer waves a little pink slip of paper.

"Ladees and gent-tel-men!" he says. "It has been the custom in the past, when champeens towered the country takin' on all comers, to offer a reward of some

sum like a hundred dollars to any man which could stand before the title holder for three or four rounds. The results of this was that a lot of young and inexperienced boys got their heads beat off and took crool and unusual punishment tryin' to stay on their feet so's in the order to git that jack. I want to say to you, one and all, this evenin', folks, that Kid Roberts is not that kind of a champeen. He's beneath takin' the advantage of his soopeerior strennth and skill. But on the behalf of the management I hereby show you a certeyfied check for five thousand dollars, which will be presented to any man in this audience *which can knock Kid Roberts off his feet inside of three rounds!"*

This always goaled the mob.

Naturally we had a couple of huskies planted in the attendance which volunteered when the young men was coy about takin' a chance of stoppin' the Kid's right with their chin. But now and then that five-thousand-buck offer caused some rustic which would of dove off Washington's monument into a bucket of water for a five-dollar note to come to the fore.

Such, gentle readers, was the case that night in Chickasha.

The announcer had hardly finished when they is a slight commotion in one of the back rows and a growin' rumble of cheers from the crowd. Up the aisle comes a human mountain which could prob'ly of gazed over the top of Eiffel's Tower without standin' on his toes, and who was likewise as delicate and sickly lookin' as the Rock of Gibraltar. Under a mop of black hair, cut high and round in the rear, his weather-beaten, sharply

cut features wasn't bad looking in a hick way. I'd guess his age as thirty-five, too old by about fifteen years to take up box fightin' as a trade. Boxin', boys and girls, is strictly a young man's game.

"Woof!" grins Dynamite Jackson to the Kid. "Sure is a tough baby comin' to visit us, boss. Looks like to me you're gonna be compelled to smack 'at boy down!"

It looked like to *me,* too, when this guy puts one mighty paw on the top rope, vaults into the ring with a thump that sent up clouds of dust from the canvas and begins removin' his coat and collar. The mob is with him to a man, and he's blushin' furiously, but game, as he begins rollin' up his sleeves without givin' the smilin' Kid as much as a look. Fin'ly he bends down and ties up a loose shoe lace, takes a couple of reefs in his belt, and faces us.

"Le's go!" he snarls at the Kid, and puts up his hands.

Whilst the crowd is still shriekin' I grabbed this dumb-bell's arm with both hands and explained to him that whilst his spirit was O. K., his costume was a trifle out of order for a boxin' bout, and that if he'd step into the dressin' room with the handlers everything would be jake. At this the man mountain balks. He claims that nothin' in the wide, wide world will induce him to remove his citizen's clothes and reveal his manly form to the multitude in a brief pair of trunks, as he is on hand to fight—not to go swimmin'. He's also got a kick to register with the regard to wearin' gloves, on the grounds that nobody could hurt each other with their hands all cushioned up, and he sneerin'ly inquires

if the Kid is afraid of him. This cuckoo was a bit rough, hey?

Well, we fin'ly talked him into strippin' to ring togs after I have convinced him that Kid Roberts has showed no signs of tryin' to sneak out of town since lookin' him over, and that he'd be pleasantly surprised in a few minutes at the damage it was possible to do with a pair of boxin' gloves if they was properly applied.

The fifteen minutes or so which this bimbo devoted to changin' his costume was nerve-rackin' on the crowd, and by the time he stepped into the ring again they was all ready to bite nails. A cheer which swayed the tent poles greeted him when he throwed off the overcoat he had draped over his walkin' beam shoulders and walked over to the corner selected for him. He viewed the two circus attendants which was deputized to handle him with open suspicion, and absolutely refused to sit down on the stool whilst waitin' for the bell. Oh, this baby was rarin' to go!

"What's yer name, feller?" whispered the announcer hoarsely, standin' beside him. "And whereabouts are ya from?"

"Joe Kenney," says the hick in a voice as deep as the center of the Atlantic. "My place is near Chickasha, and—"

"That don't mean nothin'!" snorts the announcer, straightenin' up and facin' the crowd. "Ladees and gent-tel-men!" he roars, pointin' to the astonished Joseph. "We have with us to-night Oklahoma's favorite son and one of this fair State's leadin' exponents of the manly art, which has—ah—defeated some of the best men in his class. He will now box Kid Roberts

three rounds and attempt to win the five-thousand-dollar prize by knockin' the world's heavyweight champeen off of his feet. Allow me to present to you, one and all, *Hurricane Kenney, the Chickasha Bone Crusher!"*

The mob howls with joy, and Joe Kenney's eyes stuck out of his head till you could of knock 'em off with a cane when he hears the title which the announcer had bestowed on him, the first time, as I found out later, he had ever stepped into a ring! Whilst our referee is tellin' the Chickasha Bone Crusher that kickin', bitin', jiu jitsu, or pullin' a knife will disqualify him, a scatterin' beller of "Weights! Weights!" comes up from the customers, and the announcer again whispers to Joseph, then leans over the ropes.

"The weights!" he hollers. "The weights is: Kid Roberts, one ninety-seven and a half; Hurricane Kenney, two hundred and twenty-six!"

"Wow!" shrieks the crowd. "Knock him out, Kenney, we're with ya!"

Then the bell rung. Kenney had evidently made up his mind that he would qualify immediately for the "Hurricane" label which had just been gave him, for he charged across the ring at the Kid with a snarl like a famished panther. For a man of his bulk he was really surprisin'ly light on his feet, but the first wild haymaker he let go was the tip off that Joe had never before pushed his knuckles through a boxin' glove. The Kid lazily blocked the punch and countered with a straight left to the mouth that made Kenney say how do you do and brung joyful yelps from the crowd.

The Chickasha Bone Crusher then uncorked a wicked right swing to the body, which, although the Kid took it on his elbow, drove him against the ropes and the crowd crazy.

Kenney followed the Kid up, pinnin' him against a ring post with his huge body, and suddenly slidin' one arm around the champ's neck, he begin whalin' away at the stomach with the other. The big tent fairly quivered with the uproar now, half the mob booin' Kenney and yellin' for the referee to break 'em, and the other half screamin' for the Bone Crusher to knock the Kid stiff. The pantin', excited, and red-faced referee, both hands grabbin' the wagon tongue that passed as Kenney's arm, was actually swingin' off the floor on it tryin' to unhook it from around the Kid's neck. He might as well of tried to push over the Rocky Mountain with one hand!

Roberts curled up and kept his head, makin' most of Kenney's rib crackers glance off his arms, but some of 'em was gettin' through, and when they did, havin' 226 pounds of bone and muscle behind 'em—well, they wasn't doin' the Kid any good. He kept choppin' at Kenney's head and face with his right, but this baby seemed to have a iron jaw, and, besides, they was too close together for the Kid to put any snap in his blows.

Roberts looked at me over the human bear's shoulder and shook his head, kinda puzzled.

"Down below, Kid!" I hollers. "Down below—work on his heart!"

Still cool, the champ drops his head till it rests on Kenney's heavin' chest. He sets himself for half a

second and then both arms begin pumpin' like pistons into the Hurricane's body, left—right, left—right, left —right, left—right! A minute of this and Kenney's grunts with each blow could be plainly heard by guys in the last row. The arm comes away from the Kid's neck, and I see the back muscles quiverin' under the rollin' skin.

Quick as startled lightnin' the Kid shifts his attack, and a vicious right uppercut sent the Bone Crusher back on his heels, pawin' at the breeze for support. Roberts, however, refused to follow up his advantage and put him away, but contented himself with left-handin' his man all over the ring—never lettin' the bewildered Kenney set for a solid punch.

The bell only seemed to irritate the Hurricane further, and he took two free swings at the Kid after the latter dropped his hands and started for his corner, for which the mob gave him the razz.

When the indignant referee explained to him that the gong meant cease firin', Kenney grinned sheepishly, walked over to the Kid and shook his hand, mumblin' somethin' about not knowin' the rules.

The Kid presents him with a pleasant smile and a pat on the back, and as Joseph returns to his corner the crowd give him a hand which would of tickled Chaplin.

Durin' the rest I told the Kid that as this Kenney person was about the foulest fighter I ever seen work, he had better crack him and be done with it.

Roberts shakes his head and says he'll merely keep him off and let it go at that.

"This fellow isn't deliberately foul," says the Kid.

"He's simply ignorant of the rules—that's all. I don't believe he ever fought in a ring before in his life until this minute. Besides, he's too tough and too game to be stopped with a punch. I'd have to wear him down with punishment first, and I'm not going to cut him up. Let us alone, we're having a lot of fun!"

Kenney didn't land two solid wallops durin' the entire second round, though he must of throwed eight million gloves in the general direction of the Kid's jaw.

Long before the bell he was so blown and tired from his own exertions that he lumbered around after the dancin', smilin' Kid like a drunken elephant.

Roberts simply give the Hurricane and the crowd a boxin' lesson, avoidin' Kenney's terrific clouts by shiftin' his body aside a fraction of a inch or makin' the Bone Crusher's well-meant efforts slide harmlessly around his neck by rollin' his head this way and that, whilst the customers squealed with glee. The gong was a welcome sound to Monsieur Kenney, which flopped heavily on his stool, blowin' like a school of whales.

Round three was a duplicate of the other two, with the slight exception that it only went a minute and a half. Kenney was slow to leave his corner, and so tired from chasin' the elusive Kid about the ring that he could hardly raise his hairy arms. His stomach was pumpin' in and out like a bellows.

The mob, quick to sense his condition, implored the Kid to knock him for a goal, but Roberts had no such idea. He straightened the Hurricane up with a couple of stiff jabs to the face, and Kenney's knees sagged

as he fell over against the ropes, mouth open, gaspin', and primed to be bounced.

The Kid stepped away from him to make him lead, and as Kenney swung wildly with both hands to the head, the champ slid inside the blows and planted a short right hook to the jaw. I know Roberts pulled the punch. There was hardly enough kick in it to rock a man, and a few minutes earlier Kenney would of brushed it off like a fly. But now it was all different! Out of condition and exhausted by his own wild swingin', the Bone Crusher toppled to his knees with a crash that shook the ring.

He paid no attention to the referee's count—prob'ly didn't know what it was all about—but turnin' his head around he snarled somethin' at the cuckoo mob, which was on its feet screamin' at him. Slowly and painfully Kenney pulled himself upright at the count of "six," a thin, crimson stream tricklin' from one corner of his mouth, where the Kid had prob'ly loosened a tooth. He spread his tremblin' legs wide apart to brace himself upright, and faced the Kid with danglin', useless arms, his glarin' eyes the livest portion of his tired body. Settin' his jaw, Kenney stares grimly into the Kid's troubled features.

"Go ahead, old-timer," pants this twenty-nine carat gamester, "they ain't nothin' to hinder yuh now!"

With the deleerious mob bellerin' for murder, show me the champion or preliminary bum which wouldn't of measured this guy and knocked him stiff!

But Kid Roberts drew back and looked sharply at the beaten Hurricane for a instant, and then, as Kenney suddenly swayed on his feet, the Kid stepped for-

ward and caught him in his arms, easin' him gently to the floor.

"Next!" bawls the announcer.

The mob is already jostlin' out of the exits.

We had to lay over in this burg till two o'clock the next afternoon, and durin' breakfast in the Kid's private car we get to talkin' about Monsieur Hurricane Kenney, the Chickasha Bone Crusher. I had personally gave that baby a lot of thought, for at the time I was already keepin' a eye out for a possible successor to Roberts, which couldn't be moved a inch from his determination to quit the ring after a couple of fights as champion, win, lose, or draw. The fact that the Kid had disposed of Kenney with the greatest of ease the night before didn't bother me at all—Kid Roberts himself was a terrible bust in his first start.

Kenney had showed he possessed the first and most important requirement of a fighter, viz. and to wit, courage. Also, I had the Kid's word for it that he could hit. As he stood now he didn't know the difference between a left hook and the referee, but he could be taught that, and likewise to hit from his bulgin' shoulders instead of from his hips. Although he looked ten years older, he had give his age as twenty-four, another big help. Standin' a good three inches over six foot, he scaled 226, of which perhaps fifteen pounds was flabby and could be worked off, leavin' him a steel-sinewed, giant fightin' machine with heart enough to make him a serious problem in a twenty-four foot ring for any man! As a matter of fact, I figured that about three months readyin' up and workin' out with my

champ would make Kenney ripe to wade through the third-rate heavies as sensationally as the Kid did.

I put it up to Roberts, and he was enthusiastic.

"Bring him along, by all means," he nods. "He's a good, game fellow and may develop into a first-class heavyweight. At all events, he'll make a splendid sparring partner, for, in spite of his greenness, he's tough and dangerous enough to keep me on my toes for a few minutes at least. I admire the way he stood up to me, and I'll take a great deal of interest in teaching him what I can."

He takes out his wallet and removes a hundred-case note. "Here," he adds, "that big fellow's poor showing against a smaller man last night must have been rather humiliating. I know how miserable I felt the first time! Give him this—it'll cheer him up a bit. From the desperate way he tried to put me out, the poor devil probably needs it, unless I'm very much mistaken."

He was very much mistaken! I ambled into a general store where they sold everything from potatoes to pianos, and learned that Joseph Kenney could be found on a cattle mine about two miles out of the metropolis. The merchant prince which owns the store heartily recommends his son as a scout, and a long, lean, lank dumb-bell garbed like Wm. S. Hart, minus the artillery, quits killin' flies with the lash of a quirt and nods for me to follow him out.

I was just goin' to inform him that ridin' horses was one of the two or three things I ain't fluent at, when he leads me over to a ancient, dilapidated flivver, and motions me to enter therein.

"Wait a minute!" I says. "How much is it goin' to set me back for this joy ride?"

"Twenty dollars!" answers my charmin' guide, automatically disqualifyin' himself as a movie cowboy by usin' two hands to roll a cigarette.

"I'll give you five," I says, pleasantly.

"Done," he says. "Git in and hol' fast!"

Joe Kenney, nee the Chickasha Bone Crusher, was discovered aboard a horse with some guys afoot which was mendin' rails in a fence. He returned my greetin' intact. A little mouse under his right eye and a slightly puffed lip was the only visible signs of strife on the man mountain's countenance. Realizin' how a hundred bucks must appeal to a forty-dollar-the-month cow-puncher, I drawed forth the bill and handed it to him.

"A little present from Kid Roberts," I explains with a bewitchin' smile. "Likewise, I have come to offer you a chance to make as much in a week punchin' ears as you'd make in a month punchin' steers! Boss here, is he?"

The world's largest cowboy looks the hundred-case note over carefully, folds it up, and slips it in his pocket.

"Much obliged!" he says. "This here's the Crawlin' S ranch. I own it, so I reckon I'm the boss!"

Anybody which has nothin' else to do can picture my astonishment.

"Aheh," I says, when I recovered. "Of course, bein' the wealthy owner of a steak farm instead of a lowly cowboy, them—ah—hundred smackers I just give you was unnecessary and—"

"That's all right," butts in the Bone Crusher.

"Every little bit helps! Come up to the house and I'll hear yore story."

"Eh—I hardly think it's worth while now," I says. "I'm afraid my stuff wouldn't hit you at all—you bein' a rich cattle king and the like. I come here with the idea of gettin' you interested in the box-fightin' industry, but——"

"Well, pardner," interrupts Kenney, his eyes gleamin'. "Yuh couldn't have throwed in with a more interested man. As a matter of cold fact, yore talkin' to the comin' heavyweight champeen of the world!"

This was all different and I followed him up to the house without no more further ado.

A sweet-faced, brown-eyed, fairly good-lookin' young woman is sittin' on the pazzaza wieldin' a mean darnin' needle and exercisin' women's inalienable right to hum to themselves whilst workin'. At the foot of her rockin'-chair romped, as I rightly guessed, three little Chickasha Bone Crushers.

The girl's face lit up like a cathedral when she seen Kenney, and I discovered I had been mistaken when I thought her fairly good-lookin'. She was beautiful. This love thing is wonderful stuff, and I bet they'll be a crash heard round the world when *I* fall into it!

Mention of the fact that I was manager of a prize fighter killed off the welcomin' smile on the face of Kenney's wife, but the introductions was accomplished without violence and we went on inside the house. The Chickasha Bone Crusher dragged out a box of cigars, a wink, and a bottle of prohibition antidote in that order.

Then he sits down and stretches himself.

"Come a-shootin'!" he says.

I asked him if he was in the habit of drinkin' and smokin' as trainin' exercises, and, frownin', he says he was in the habit of doin' what he pleased, so I made the greatest haste to remark that whilst it was none of my business, he was ruinin' his wind with the smokes and his nerves with the hooch and that most successful scrappers laid off both.

With a grin, Kenney reaches lazily over and picks up a unusually thick poker from the fireplace. Placin' his hands about a foot apart on it, he bent it double like I'd fold a sheet of paper. Then he bent it back again and tossed it clatterin' on the floor.

I'd never seen the stunt done before with such little effort. They was no veins standin' out like whipcords, as the sayin' is, on Kenney's 20-inch neck, nor did beads of perspiration drop off his brow. He done the thing as carelessly as he'd break a matchstick. The Bone Crusher didn't have to do that to show *me* his muscle. A look at him and you'd believe he'd moved Grant's Tomb six inches with his shoulders! But strength alone, boys and girls, is not enough to become a title holder in fistiana.

For the example, every good wrestler has had ambitions to become a boxin' champ at one time or another in his career and a great many of 'em have laced on a pair of gloves and stepped into a ring only to be made look foolish by some third-rate pug. Even Frank Gotch, the daddy of 'em all, once had this experience. Professional strong men, weight lifters, and the like are flops as a rule when they turn to the ring. Their sinews havin' been developed for show or pushin' and

haulin' purposes, they're so slow and muscle-bound that the slighter boxer has no trouble at all steppin' around 'em and pastin' 'em pretty.

But to get back to the Bone Crusher. Inside of a half hour I have found out that readin' about what heavyweight champions got for a few minutes' work had murdered Joe Kenney's interest in the art of raisin' cows. Likewise, Joseph made no secret of the fact that he figured himself a topside slugger, able to hold his own with the best of 'em right now.

"Well, Joe," I says enthusiastically, when he got finished, "I'm for you and so's Kid Roberts. Get your hat on and we'll go down to a notary's public if they is one in this burg. I'll sign you up for three years and you can start workin' out with the Kid right away. With me as your manager and the champ as your teacher—why, say, inside of a year—"

"Draw in yore loop, old-timer!" butts in Joe, risin' and handin' me my hat. "I don't need no manager, and I ain't aimin' to take no job as a helper. I don't want to take advantage of yore champeen by joinin' up with his outfit, because I can lick the tar out of him right now! While yore here, I'm a-givin' yuh fair warnin'—the next time I run across yore man, I'm comin' a-sluggin' with both hands!"

A dumb-bell is a awful thing, hey?

The Kid and me split a laugh between us when I told him how the Chickasha Bone Crusher had received my generous offer. Then we forgot all about Monsieur Kenney.

The next stop was Tycopee, another duck-in and

duck-out hamlet, and when the Kid finishes his act and calls for volunteers, Battlin' Thomas, one of the plants we carried, starts up the aisle, as they is no response from the brave men and true in the audience.

Halfways to the ring the Battler is pushed to one side by a large, tall person wearin' a wide-brimmed black Stetson.

Layin' one hand on the top rope, the stranger leaps into the ring, waves his hand airily to the shoutin' crowd, and presents me and the Kid with a sneerin', full-toothed grin.

"Beats all how us boys *do* cross trails!" says Hurricane Kenney, the Chickasha Bone Crusher, throwin' his coat over one of the posts. "I'd admire to draw down them five thousand dollars. Whereabouts is them gauntlets?"

Twenty minutes later the Kid is shakin' hands with a somewhat battered and slightly bleedin' human shock absorber entitled Hurricane Kenney. One of Kenney's glims is a study in purple, and a cut on his left cheek bone shows the dashin' rancher to be possessed of red blood anyways. Kid Roberts is sportin' several crimson blotches on his gleamin' white body where some of the Hurricane's wild haymakers has landed, but outside of that is unharmed.

"Better luck next time, old man!" smiles the Kid as we're leaving the ring.

"I'll knock yuh out the next time!" growls the jovial Kenney.

We had a hundred-and-fifty-mile jump from this slab, and a wicked rainstorm when we got there kept most of the natives away. But it didn't keep Joe Ken-

ney away! Joseph ambled up the aisle and took a front seat whilst the Kid was givin' a exhibition of bag punchin'. Seein' him, the Kid laughed and then nodded pleasantly and Joe replied with a snarl that caused the hicks on both sides of him to edge from him nervously.

A short time afterward Joe give the customers a treat by crashin' through the ropes to the floor twice, in his desperate efforts to knock Kid Roberts for a row of ash cans. About the only time Kenney laid a glove on the Kid was when they shook hands at the end of the thing.

Well, for the next half dozen times the Chickasha Bone Crusher was a regular feature of the show, wherever they permitted boxin'. Kid Roberts, which seemed to be gettin' a lot of giggles out of Kenney, refused to knock him stiff and be done with it, although he always had to slow up this big ham early with a smash over the heart so's no accidents would happen. Fin'ly we get to New Orleans, where we're due to linger a week. Kenney fails to appear on the openin' night, and I lay the Kid eight to five that the Bone Crusher has decided to call it a day. He showed up on the last night and the big stiff thereby costs me eight hundred fish.

But before Kenney lumbered into the ring that eve me and the Kid has a visitor in the shape of no less than the Bone Crusher's charmin' young wife. She has came all the ways from dear old Chickasha unknown to her bitter half, and if it wasn't for the cute trick she had of scrunchin' up her little nose I doubt if I would of knew her.

They was half moons under the honest brown eyes

and she's a bit pale and drawn. Sniffin' scornfully at the bespangled, short-skirted ladies of the trapeze and the etc., she made her way over to where we was standin' on the lot. She'd seen me, of course, before, but not the Kid, and she's standin' right in front of him when she asks where she can find the champion.

Roberts has his hat off and is bowin' at her before I can stall her and Mrs. Hurricane Kenney's eyes registers surprise as they sweep the smilin' Kid from stem to stern. No doubt she expected to see some cauliflower-eared, red-faced, snaggled-toothed, hairy cave man instead of this handsome young blond which looked almost slight alongside of her gigantic helpmeet.

Although I kept both ears wide open and both eyes glued on hers whilst she talked, I could find nothin' suspicious about her story—told in a haltin', moist voice which had the sympathetic Kid for her, and me wavrin' before she had said six words. It seemed that Joe Kenney had now gone cuckoo on the subject of box fightin', and his idea that he would be the next world's heavyweight champion had been greatly strengthened by the fact that the Kid hadn't flattened him to date. So he has turned his ranch over to a dumb-bell brother to run and, accordin' to Mrs. Kenney, said brother is runnin' it right into the ground.

At this point Mrs. Kenney resorts to the use of props. She extracts a gram of lace from her pocketbook and with a occasional touch of it to the eyes she says she and the Bone Crusher was happy and everything was jake till the circus and the Kid come to town. She don't accuse the Kid in words of havin' gummed things up, but she does it with her eyes, whilst she's half

sobbin' that she don't want her husband to be no pugeylist and that him chasin' all over the country after the circus is bustin' up her home. She claims if the Kid don't send the wanderin' Bone Crusher back to Chickasha, Kenney won't have no wife, ranch, or jack left.

"It might sound funny to you, Mister Kid," she winds up, with a quiverin' of lip that was sure fire on Roberts. "But it's a tragedy to me!"

Well, the Kid spent the best part of fifteen minutes tellin' her to go home and cheer up, leavin' everything else to us.

He says if Hurricane Kenney shows up in this burg he will have a long talk with him and do all he can to lay him off the art of box fightin'. He also adds that Kenney is the luckiest guy since Columbus to have discovered a wife like she, which brings a healthy blush and a pleasant smile to the rapidly brightenin' face of Mrs. K. Then I crammed into her hands a lot of balloons to be blowed up and other souvenirs of the circus for the kids, and we took her to the station in the Kid's bus, so's the Bone Crusher wouldn't run across her was he in our midst.

These frequent settos with the good-natured world's champion wasn't makin' Kenney no worse, and he has now advanced to the point where he's hittin' straight from the shoulder and the Kid is extended to keep him off without droppin' him this time. After the bout we go into the dressin' room off the ring to interview Kenney as advertised to his wife. As a success, the interview was a failure.

Kid Roberts, with a brotherly air advises the Chick-

asha Bone Crusher to quit followin' us hithers and yon and go back to his charmin' consort. He tells Kenney what a tough game boxin' is, how he personally dislikes it himself and that he's goin' to leave the ring flat on its back in another year. Windin' up, the Kid pats the Bone Crusher on the back and remarks that with his wonderful family and prosperous ranch, Kenney's a sultan compared to the average prize fighter.

The Chickasha Bone Crusher, pullin' on his citizen's clothes, has heard Kid Roberts through without a word but with a sneer on his face which would of caused anybody else in the world outside of the Kid to knock him dead as he sat on the stool. Now, he looks up from tyin' his shoes and one swollen lip curls to the tip of his beak.

"Sho' is noble of yuh to look after me," he snarls, "but yuh can't buck jump *me* thataway. I aims to stay on yore back till I'm champeen, which same I'll be as sure as my name's Joe Kenney! Reckon I'm gettin' too rough for yuh, hey? Come mighty near ropin' yuh there for a minute to-night, didn't I? Yeh, and I *would* have, only they rung the bell when they seen yuh was hurt. Good thing I had them pillows on my hands or I'd have sure mussed up that baby face of yourn, pardner! I'd admire to take yuh on in a finish fight with bare knuckles—without no bells and without that cotton paddin' on my hands!" He give a nasty laugh. "But I don't reckon yuh hanker for no manhandlin'. Takes a *fighter* for that, not a boxer, hey?"

"You big—" I begins, but the hard glitter only stayed a second in the Kid's eyes. He pulled me to the door.

"Kenney," he laughs shortly, "you're an insulting and

aggravating fool! For your information, let me say that I could have knocked you out at any time you were in the ring with me. I don't want deliberately to hurt you, and evidently nothing but a thorough beating will reach your asinine egotism. Well, I'm human, Kenney—in the future, keep away from me!"

We didn't wait for the Bone Crusher's answer.

From New Orleans to Washington Kenney followed the circus, but he had no more bouts with the Kid. Instead in every town he publicly challenged my title holder to a finish fight for the world's championship, which got us *beaucoup* publicity gratis in the sticks. In most of the big burgs the wise-crackin' newspaper guys had the Bone Crusher pegged as a plant and wouldn't give him a tumble. In Washington, however, one of the sport writers fell for him and after a interview, printed under Kenney's photo a two-column blah of romantical hooch about him bein' a dashin' cowboy from the ferocious West and the etc., and demandin' that he be gave a crack at the title immediately.

Well, boys and girls, he got it!

The minute we blowed into the nation's capital, Kid Roberts fled out to Senator Brewster's palace to pass the time of day with his comin' bride, the delicious Dolores. He cut his act down to twenty minutes that night, leavin' the sparrin' out entirely, and I followed him into the dressin' room to find his Jap valet layin' out a dress suit and packin' a bathrobe, fightin' trunks, and bandages into a grip. He grins at the expression which must of been on my face.

"Just in time!" he says. "I was going to send Kogi after you. I've got to be downtown by ten-fifteen—

see that the car's ready, will you, old man? I've promised Dolores I'd box two rounds with some one at the Red Cross benefit to-night. She's one of the patronesses, you know, and it will be rather a feather in her cap to have a world's champion there. They have a big card of theatrical stars, movie people, and a lot of prominent boxers. You know how these things are, one has to help. I want you to handle me yourself—this will be nothing, just an exhibition, and I'm afraid Dynamite Jackson and Knockout Burns might scare the ladies away!"

"Well—all right," I grumbled. "I guess they's no harm in helpin' the Red Cross, Kid, but this here's kind of sudden. I don't like these short-notice affairs. Who you goin' to box and—"

Kid Roberts throws back his head and laughs. "Hurricane Kenney, the Chickasha Bone Crusher!" he chortles. "He's apparently impressed this sporting writer who wrote that article about him, and I really believe the pair of them think they're slipping one over on me. Of course Kenney's challenging me has smoked the thing up so that—"

"Knock him dead the minute he puts up his hands," I butts in. "We'll get *that* baby all settled to-night!"

"I'm afraid I may *have* to stop him this time," says the Kid grimly, shakin' his head. "The poor fool. Well—come on!"

The last-minute announcement that Kid Roberts was goin' to step two rounds with Hurricane Kenney, the cowboy challenger for the championship, brought two-

thirds of Washington out to the big auditorium where the Red Cross benefit was bein' had. By the time we had shouldered our way through the mob down into the basement where the men's dressin' room was, congressmen was out in the street fightin' with less known millionaires for the privilege of payin' two hundred bucks to stand up inside. We could plainly hear Kenney's voice in the room opposite the one we took whilst I was bandagin' the Kid's hands. I hadn't bothered to lock the door, and suddenly it opens and closes gently and when I glance quickly around at the Kid's startled exclamation, I see no less than Mrs. Kenney is inside. She's tremblin' like a shaken jelly and on the brinks of weeps. Her cute little face is the color of cream, but her eyes is feverish.

The Kid jumps up frownin'ly and throws a bathrobe around his shoulders.

"Forgive me—I—I—had to come!" pants Mrs. Kenney in a chokin' whisper. "I—*Joe has sold the ranch and bet every penny we have in the world that he will knock you out to-night!*"

"Oh, the infernal ass!" gasps the Kid. "Good Heavens, what a mess! You poor girl!"

"Who did he bet with—quick!" I says. "Maybe I can—"

"It's too late!" moans Mrs. Kenney, collapsin' into a chair and hidin' her face in her hands. "I saw the man—Big Bill Henderson, they call him—who's holding the stakes. I told him everything, but it was no use. He said he would not give Joe back the money unless there wasn't any bout. There *must* not be a bout, do you hear?"

She jumps up off the chair and faces the Kid like she was willin' to take him on herself!

"My dear girl," says the Kid, "I would do anything in the world to help you, but if I refuse to meet your husband now I—why—I'd be the laughing-stock of the country! The ridicule would prevent me from—"

"I don't *want* you to refuse to meet him!" interrupts Mrs. Kenney, excitedly. "That wouldn't cure him. Joe would still think he could whip you then and he'd keep after you until you fought him! You don't know him like I do."

The Kid, pacin' up and down the room, has been castin' nervous glances at the hall. Now he stops and bends over her with a finger on his lip.

"Sssh!" he says in a low voice. "Mrs. Kenney, you will have to leave my dressing room. I'll delay the bout and try to think of some way out of this muddle for you, but you must go immediately and be careful not to be seen leaving here. You have been very indiscreet in coming here at all! Your husband is dressing in a room across the corridor, and if he heard your voice—found out you were in here—well, it is quite possible with his quick temper that he might—eh—misinterpret your visit. Please go at once."

Mrs. Kenney caught her breath in a half sob that sent my Adam's apple bobbin' around like a cork in the ocean, and the Kid's drawn face showed how deeply he was moved. She looked so little and helpless standin' there beside us two big stiffs that—oh, dammit, you know! I turned away, but out of the corner of my eye I see her edgin' slowly for the door.

"If—if Joe couldn't appear—out there—the bets would be off, wouldn't they?" she breathes.

I nodded.

Then—Sweet Mamma, listen!

The soft brown eyes turns hard and glitterin'. *She suddenly bangs the door shut, turns the key, and lets out a ear-splittin' shriek!* Almost on the instant it seemed to me, a bull's beller boomed in the hall, the door rattles, and—smash! Flounderin', sprawlin', hysterically cursin', Joe Kenney crashed through the crumbled door into the room.

Like the Kid, Kenney was in ring togs minus the gloves, a roll of soft bandage still danglin' from one hand. For a second he peered around the dressin' room like a guy walkin' from the dark into a brilliantlly lighted hall. His little, flamin' red eyes passed over me on to his chalk-faced wife which stood silent against the wall, her face turned away from the amazed stare of the Kid.

I grabbed her arm and shook it, pointin' frantically to Kenney—tryin' to show her by signs to say somethin', explain the thing to her husband. For some reason, I couldn't talk, though my lips worked enough! She hung her head and said *nothin'*. With a roarin' curse, the Bone Crusher got me by the waist and throwed me the length of the room. I fell sprawlin' in a corner and then, whilst the mob waited impatiently upstairs for the world's champion and his cowboy challenger to climb through the ropes for a two-round, gentlemanly sparrin' exhibition, they fought in the dressin' room the bloodiest, most sensational battle that I, you, or anybody else ever was privileged to see and they

went at it the way Kenney always wanted it—with bare knuckles!

I can close my glims and see that scrap now as well as if it come off last night. Boys and girls, it was sure one for the book! They was no ring, no padded mitts, no referee to prevent foul fightin', no bell to call a brief halt, no handlers to sponge off gore or close a ugly cut.

No yellin' crowd was poundin' their seats and eggin' them babies on—they was nothin' but Kenney's wife sunk to her knees, her face buried in her arms at one end of the room and me crouched half dazed in the other, tryin' to keep cool and advise my battler, which was absolutely fightin' for his *life*.

Over the busted door peered a half dozen scared faces, but if they did or said anything, nobody noticed.

They was no stallin' this time, no pullin' wallops to let Kenney stay. Kid Roberts was puttin' everything he had into each punch, for the Chickasha Bone Crusher had turned killer and twice had bent the Kid over his giant's knee with both hands sunk in his white throat. Each time the gaspin' Kid had wriggled free and pounded Kenney's face to a purple jelly before the Bone Crusher bulled his way in close to grab the champ around the body with one arm and pound his ribs with the other. A wild swing caught Roberts fair on the chin and he crashed against the opposite wall, his head hittin' with a crack that wrung a scream from me. In a flash, Kenney was on him, bangin' him back and forth against the wall with little, sickenin' snarlin' grunts like a wild animal over its kill.

Half cuckoo, I jumped to my feet and pawed at the

Bone Crusher's wet and strainin' back. "Fight fair—you big yellah bum!" I shrieked, and it was the Kid, with a tooth-barin' snarl that equaled Kenney's own, which shoved me away with a free arm. Kenney, havin' exhausted every foul means of fightin'—fair enough to him, I guess, accordin' to the rules of what brawls *he'd* been in—decided to butt the Kid and as he lowered his head, Roberts straightened him up with a terrific left and right, danced away from the wall and broke the Bone Crusher's nose with a solid right smash.

The ensuin' gore covered them both, and I have no doubt that by this time Kenney had went clean crazy, for he grabbed at a chair and brung it down on the Kid's shoulders, crashin' him to the floor. Had I a gat, I would of cooked Monsieur Kenney then and there! I done the best I could, by shovin' out a foot and trippin' him as he rushed to give the prostrate Kid the boots.

They both got up at the same time and stood pantin', facin' each other—a sight for a movie director. Kenney's face was a shapeless mass from which features could only be picked by guess work.

The Kid, drenched with the Bone Crusher's gore, looked almost as bad, and they was a expression on his face I had seldom seen there when he was in a ring. Forced into this mill, Roberts had took more punishment than he ever had before in his life, and his ability to take it amazed even me. He'd been manhandled, fouled and hurt, and, shakin' his blond head, he plunged into Kenney like a lean, savage wolf against a ragin' bear. For a full minute now they stood toe to toe and slugged, and few wallops went wild, though none had the steam behind them they had at first.

They'd both taken enough solid smashes to of licked a dozen heavies!

A funny look of awed wonderment begin to spread over Kenney's crimson map. Slowly he begin to give ground, his one good eye blinkin' in fear and amazement. Almost twice the size of the slender Kid, he had give him everything he had—buried his fists to the wrist in that corded steel body a dozen times *and the Kid was still there,* givin' wallop for wallop. I forgot the fight almost in watchin' Kenney's face, and I knew I read his thoughts correct, when without hardly knowin' it, I bawled: "Now you know why he's champion, you big tramp!"

I could of swore Kenney nodded. Anyhow, he begin to back pedal desperately, and now the Kid was cool and grinnin' for the first time since the murder started. He feinted the Bone Crusher into a openin' and drove through his right to the jaw. The groggy Kenney swayed back and forth, both arms clumsily raised before his battered face, and settin' himself, Kid Roberts banged one of Kenney's own fists against his chin with another torrid right. The man mountain toppled forward into a perfectly timed uppercut, seemed to hang in the air a instant, and suddenly toppled over on his back—knocked stiff!

Gaspin', the Kid stood over him glarin' down at the lifeless hulk. He actually seemed sorry it was over!

Mrs. Kenney pulls the Bone Crusher's head into her lap and, weepin' softly, is tryin' to wipe off the gore with a one-inch handkerchief. The Kid bends down to her, his own voice shakin'.

"Mrs. Kenney," he says, "this is a terrible thing—but it had to be! There was no way—"

"I'm glad he was whipped," butts in the remarkable Mrs. Kenney, meetin' the Kid's eye. "Now maybe—he'll—stay—home—with—me!"

Yet when Roberts reaches down to sponge Kenney's face, she knocks his arm away.

"Let him alone!" she says fiercely and covers the Bone Crusher's face with her arms. "Go away and leave him with me. You've done enough!"

Girls is a bit odd, hey?

A announcement is made to the mob that the Kid Roberts-Hurricane Kenney bout is off—on account of Kenney havin' hurt his arm in trainin'. So that was that.

Being terrible tough, the Bone Crusher is in shape to start back to dear old Chickasha with the Missus in a hour. By usin' her nut, his charmin' wife has saved him his dough, the humiliation of gettin' a proper pastin' before the crowd, and likewise convinced him that ranchin' is a better game than fightin'. The deepest regret Kenney seemed to have when he come to was that the only time his wife had ever seen him fight was the holocaust just finished in which he run second and he remarks half mournfully to Roberts:

"She must think I'm a hell of a fighter, now!"

The Kid shook his hand warmly and told him he had gave him the hardest battle he'd had or ever hoped to have in his life. Then he turns to Mrs. Kenney.

"And now," he says, grimly, "perhaps you'll explain

to your husband just why you came to my dressing room this evening—and screamed!"

At this the Bone Crusher, which seemed to have forgot the cause of the muss, straightens up again and growls, his grin freezin' into a scowl at the Kid.

"Why—of course," says Mrs. Kenney, brightly, lookin' straight into the Kid's face and speakin' to her husband. "I came down here looking for your dressing room and—er—I—entered Mister Roberts's by mistake. *When I saw that I was in the wrong room it gave me such a start that—I—I just—screamed from —eh—fright—that was all!* I would have explained at once, but you began fighting and I had no chance."

Woof!

"Oh—aheh—I see!" grins Kenney, with a sheepish look at the Kid.

But the Kid ain't lookin' at *him*. Roberts is regardin' Mrs. Kenney with open admiration. She gets a slow crimson and turns her head. Kenney looks from one to the other with a puzzled frown.

"Come on!" says the Kid to me. "I've got to do some explaining myself. Throw my stuff in the grip and we'll use Kenney's room to dress."

He went out and Kenney stands lookin' at his wife for a minute. It struck me that he seemed half pleased that she had drawed that glance from the champion, though of course the poor boob didn't know what had caused it.

"He's not a bad hombre," remarks the Bone Crusher, "and he licked me fair enough—but he ain't fooled me none with his slick talk. That feller was *stuck* on yuh.

Bess. I could see it in his eyes when he looked at yuh! Guess I better get yuh home to the ranch, or I'll be losin' yuh, eh? All the punchin' I'm goin' to do hereafter, Bess, will be in connection with cows!"

Thus passed Joseph Kenney, the Chickasha Bone Crusher. . . .

Some time very late that night Kid Roberts is tellin' Miss Dolores Brewster, in a reception room off the ballroom at the Red Cross dance, that he got the bumps on his face in a auto accident and that he don't feel up to foxtrottin', but will call for her after the ball.

"Please let me explain, dear, why I didn't appear at the benefit," he's sayin'. "The most sensational thing—"

"I know all about it!" Dolores butts in, smilin'. "Mrs. Kenney—that cowboy's wife, you know—found out I was connected with the affair and came to me this afternoon. Imagine the poor little thing coming all the way from Oklahoma! She wanted to prevent the bout—told me a most pathetic story. I'll tell you about that later, but I gave her my word I would try and stop you and her husband from entering the ring to-night. I phoned all over town and couldn't find you and I felt horrid. I wish you could have seen her, Kane, she was so tragic! Well, I finally hit upon the scheme of sending a wire to your dressing room warning you not to enter the ring to-night, as the police were going to stop the exhibition on the ground that it was a prize fight. Wasn't I clever? That's what prevented the bout, wasn't it?"

"Yes!" I almost hollered, kickin' the Kid right in the ankle.

The Kid is still chokin', when a page sticks his head in the room.

"Telegram for Mister Roberts!" chants the boy. "Telegram for Mister Roberts!"

Curtain!

ROUND TEN

WHEN KANE MET ABEL

THERE'S prob'ly no other competition in the world, sportin' or otherwise, which draws a human gatherin' as miscellaneous and interestin' as a prize-fight crowd. Whilst waitin' for the gladiators to enter the bull pen the next time you go to a mill, sit back and look around at the customers, and you'll find every trade, art, gift, science, business, profession, sex, and color represented by one member at the least. Bankers and bricklayers, doctors and dock hands, millionaires and mechanics, accountants and actors, etc. and etc., jostle, kid, and argue each other purple in the face over the merits of their respective favorites.

To a guy which thinks the Human Race is easily as excitin' as the one with the chariots in "Ben Hur," the crowd at a box fight is generally worth the price of admission whether the bouts themselves is quiet or riots. Taken as a mass, the fans is *always* with the boy which is winnin' unless his charmin' vis and vis is a large local favorite or a unusual glutton for punishment. The bird which can hit like nitroglycerine and the tough baby which adores chastisement is the twin gods of the mob. The remarkably clever but light-tappin' boxer, flittin' about the ring

A Universal Production. *The Leather Pushers.*

THE KID FLOORS MORGAN WITH A HARD LEFT.

like one of them classical dancers to avoid the gruel, and the faint-hearted or glass-jawed bimbo which can't take it and dives into a clinch when shook up, is the pair the gang wants assassinated, and them two gets the raspberry from the minute they're introduced to the attendance till they sneak or are carried from the ring.

The quaint custom of givin' the raspberry to a unpopular boxer prob'ly originated at the ringside of the One Round David-Knockout Goliath battle, which terminated in Dave knockin' his heavier opponent's head off and thereby becomin' one of the first world's champion scrappers. For the benefit of them which thinks of the raspberry merely as a fruit, I will explain that in our set the term "raspberry" means a continual uproar of violent, insultin', uncalled for, vociferous vocal abuse. It's the nightmare of the high-strung, inexperienced fighter, and, made nasty and incessant enough, will shake the nerves of the hardest boiled veteran. It's caused scores of green kids to lose heart and go down to defeat before guys they could of knocked stiff with the greatest of ease on a vacant lot. When you have stopped a terrific right cross with your features, and drag yourself up off the canvas tryin' to peer through the crimson cascade that's drenchin' 'em, it don't assist you a particle to hear a few thousand maniacs callin' you a big bum and implorin' the other guy to murder you!

With all its faults, however, the typical American fight crowd is rarely anything more vicious than a gang of noisy, overgrown kids out havin' some fun. As a whole, it's extremely fair in its judgment. If it has

the human weakness of trailin' with the winner, it's also quick to resent unfair tactics and will razz its local favorite with as much enthusiasm as it will the visitin' boxer at the first sign of foul fightin'. No matter how slovenly a exhibition a novice may put up, or how loudly the mob has jeered him whilst he was in there tryin', he's sure of a warm and rousin' send-off when he leaves the ring if he's showed heart enough to stand up to his beatin' like a he-man. And with all its bedlam of "Knock him kickin', kid!" "Go on, you big dumb-bell, put him out!" etc., the gang is a soft-hearted bunch underneath. A appeal for funds for any cause in the wide, wide world made from the ring by the hoarse-voiced announcer will bring a shower of dough from all parts of the house without hesitation or question, as all our standard charities know.

You can make a interestin' study of character by lookin' over the different types around you durin' a particularly excitin' scrap. There's the guys which flinches mechanically with every thuddin' wallop that lands on the battlers, and the ones which snarlin'ly grits their teeth and shoves out their *own* jaw without hardly knowin' it when one of the fighters stops one with his chin; the boys which goes cuckoo and is hoarse for days afterward, and the cold-eyed babies which don't bat a eye or let a peep out of 'em no matter how thrillin' the thing gets. The blown-in-the-flask fan, however, is the bird which gets as close to the ring as his bank roll will take him, beams on one and all, sits back with a sigh of undiluted joy and bawls: "Go on, you tramps, git mad and knock *each other* out. Less see somethin' *fall!*"

To this bozo anything short of a murder is a bum fight. He craves blood and knockdowns, or his money back. Caterin' to this type of guy's peculiar and exactin' taste almost cost Kid Roberts the world's heavyweight championship.

It seems to be a iron-bound rule in the modern American prize ring that a new heavyweight champ be allowed at least a year to stall in before defendin' his title, durin' which time he can grab off slews of sugar by appearin' on the stage and in the movies without a single moan from the only guys in a position to make him fight, to the i. e., the sport writers. Title holders in every other class has got to go to the post regularly every couple of months against a logical contender, or be roasted a rich brown in the newspapers as "cheese champions," and the etc., but the reignin' emperor of all the heavies is always apparently typewriter proof.

In the case of Kid Roberts, how the so ever, they was really no heavy in sight at the time he win the title which could of gave him as much as a brick workout. He'd flattened all the good ones on his way to the top, and it was nearly a year later before we signed to step twenty frames with Jack Enright, then a sensational newcomer. This was the first of the only two bouts the Kid ever fought as champion and his next to final battle in the ring. Meanwhile, we assassinated time by givin' exhibitions with the circus I spoke of before and appearin' in a movie at Loose Angeles, Califilmia, for more large gobs of jack. I'll tell you about the Kid's last two brawls the next time

we get together—this evenin's talk will be devoted to his one amazin' adventure as a movie hero.

Movie cameras shootin' at the ringside of a regular prize fight, by the way, has never made no hit with the battlers, though, of course, the sugar they get therefrom *has*. The presence of the camera filmin' a man's every move has a tendency to make him want to pose, and, caught off guard for a fatal second as a result, he may be knocked stiff.

On the ways out to the State where all the good little actors hope to go, the streets bein' paved with gold and all the angels wavin' movie contracts, me and the Kid is kept supplied with giggles by Knockout Burns, a tough old war horse which I brung along to keep the champion in condition. It was the first time Knockout had ever rode in a Pullman where the doors was on each end instead of the sides, and he spent most of his time on the observation platform markin' off the various slabs on his time-table as we breezed through 'em, remarkin' that like as not the engineer would hold a couple of these burgs out on him if he didn't check them up. The first night he crawled in to his upper berth he laid awake two hours waitin' for a Chink to come along with the hop layout he figured went with it, and, not bein' able to sleep, he spent the night heavin' the gallopin' dominoes with the porters, winnin' $180 by daylight. In the diner, when the waiter tells him his oysters is out in the kitchen gettin' stewed, Knockout puts forty grouches in good humor by askin' is they any objection to him goin' out in the kitchen and gettin' stewed *with* 'em. Goin' through Arizona, the Kid remarks that

we're skirtin' the largest copper State, and Knockout says he always thought the largest coppers come from Ireland. And when we hissed through Yaggy, Kansas, this dumb-bell claims that they ain't no place in the world actually had a handle like that, but that's prob'ly the name the town fights under.

This guy win the cement hairbrush, hey?

When we fin'ly docked at the Land of Flowers and Sunshine, Sweet Mamma, how the rain was comin' down! We swum out to a taxi and Knockout Burns points out the cloudburst to the guy at the wheel, askin' him if this was a sample of the delicious climate which all the Californians raves about when they come East for a slummin' trip. The chauffeur shakes six gallons of rain out of his hat and looks up at the sky whilst the drops bounce off his face. "Hump!" he remarks. "Darned if we ain't havin' a high fog!"

Bloodshed was avoided by throwin' Knockout into the back of the cab and slammin' the door.

But it was all different the followin' morn, and as we rolled out to Hollywood in the beautiful warm sunshine and the comely tourin' car the movie company sent to the hotel after us, passin' through rows of shelterin' palms, bloomin' flowers, dumfounded tourists which has never been nowheres, but which repeats over and over: "I never seen nothin' like this in Europe!" and dazzlin' movie queens which looks even better off the screen—well, even the hard-boiled Knockout Burns leans back in the cushions and gasps: "Say, this slab's a dude of a burg, hey?"

Fin'ly we get to the studio, and they is a good-sized

mob on hand to lamp the world's champion. As outside the ring, Kid Roberts looked like anything in the world but a prize fighter, half the witnesses pegged Knockout Burns for the title holder, and this big bozo stood up in the car and took eight bows before I yanked him down in the seat. We hold a short reception, and then over comes a little guy entitled Cuthbert Van Dyke, whose name I hear is really Luther O'Brien and who's knowed around the lot as "Joe." He walks right up to Knockout Burns and grabs his hand. "Well, well, well," he says. "This is certainly a treat. So this is the famous Kid Roberts, eh? Well, well, well! How d'ye like California?"

"Fried!" says Knockout with a goofy grin. "What time does Charlie Chaplin come to work?"

At this critical point, whilst the hysterics is at their height and Van Dyke's face is redder than fifty cents' worth of tomatoes, Kid Roberts steps into the breeches and introduces us all around. Van Dyke turns out to be the guy which is goin' to direct the Kid's movie, and he seems dumfounded at the way the boy handles the President's english, and likewise because the champ looks and acts like he was more used to a dress suit than fightin' trunks. Amongst the others which shares our charmin' director's surprise is Nada Nice, which is carded to be the Kid's leadin' lady in the forthcomin' thriller. The fair Nada had evidently expected to be at the loss how to put a world's champion prize fighter at his ease, but before they talked ten minutes Kid Roberts—late of Yale and Fifth Avenue—was tryin' to make *Nada* feel comfortable.

They is not the slightest doubt that Nada Nice was

all her name suggested. Yes, boys and girls, Nada was a pulse quickener of the first water, and it was comical to watch Knockout Burns, lockjawed for once, gazin' at her with his mouth as open as a Memphis crap game and his eyes a foot from his head. The beauteous damsel favored the battle-scarred Knockout with a scornful quirk of a too red lip, and trained her heavy guns on Kid Roberts, which never give her a tumble, thereby allowin' Nada to enjoy a sensation she prob'ly hadn't had since she was fourteen years old. You see, the Kid was signed up for all of it with Dolores, which could of spotted Venus five cans of complexion cream and then made the noted model look like a overworked dishwasher! If you owned the Pacific Ocean, would you get a thrill out of gazin' upon a glass of water? Well, that was the Kid's position —get me?

How the so ever, in spite of the fact that Kid Roberts showed no indication of gettin' chills and fever from watchin' Nada, I felt they was a bust comin' before we got through elevatin' the deaf and dumb drama. I knew Nada wouldn't be happy till the handsome world's champion got lured into gettin' personal so's she could bawl him out, and thus get revenge for him askin' her what she thought of Wagner's Rheingold and trappin' her into answerin' that she had favored Budweiser before Keeley went crazy and cured the entire country. Then again, Knockout Burns was overboard over her and would have to be disposed of, and I had caught Van Dyke frownin' heartily at Nada every time she tried out a grin on the Kid. On the top of all this, they was a

chance of Dolores Brewster herself comin' to California to spend the winter, and she was just broad-minded enough to go up in the air sixty-four miles the first time she seen the Kid and Nada clinched, movie or no movie! So you can see that things was set for a jam, and said jam was had, but it was a twist which had never entered my dome which caused it.

Well, after we have decided to adjourn the mutual admiration society, we trip over to Van Dyke's office for the purposes of havin' the scenario of the Kid's movie read at us. The picture is called "The Knockout," and they is apparently everything in it but the battle of Bunker Hill and the landin' of the Pilgrim family. Action? You tell 'em, camera, I'm overexposed! Van Dyke and his merry men, includin' the composer of the thing, seemed to think it a wow, but Kid Roberts begin waggin' his head after the first few seconds, and his lip begins to curl.

"What's the idea?" butts in the director on the author's readin', speakin' to the Kid. "Don't it hit you?"

"A bit absurd, don't you think?" says the Kid politely. "That—eh—throwing those fellows over the cliff and—"

"Never mind, Kid," pipes up Knockout Burns, with a wink at Nada, "what do *you* care? It's all fun!"

"All *fun!*" howls Van Dyke, jumpin' up and glarin' at him. "D'ye know that it's gonna set us back about sixty thousand berries to shoot this? All *fun,* eh? You try to clown this, you dumb-bell, and—"

"Burns, shut up!" orders Kid Roberts, smilin'. "Pay no attention to him," he goes on, turnin' to the enraged

Van Dyke: "Go on and read the rest of this idiotic—eh—this story. I'm anxious to hear the climax."

"Sure!" says Knockout Burns, waggin' a finger at Van Dyke. "Quit holdin' out on us. I don't think they's enough murders in it myself. In the, now, Births of the Nation, they was—"

I clamped both hands over his mouth and, chokin' back a howl, Van Dyke smoothes his hair, turns to the Kid and continues.

"Now," he says, "here's the big wow! You're fightin' the English champeen, and, as you remember from what has gone before, your life, honor, and the woman you love is at stake—see? One of your seconds has been bribed by the Secret Twelve to slip dope in your water bottle—see? All right, now you come up for the last round, suddenly dazed and groggy—see? The crowd is goin' cuckoo—you get floored twice—stagger around helplessly, about to be knocked cold—see? Then Miss Nice appears in your corner—there's a shot showin' her fightin' her way through the mob down the aisle—see? As the Englishman is about to knock you stiff, you see her—your face brightens up—Wam!—you knock the Englishman through the ropes—the Secret Twelve is beaten—the girl's father is saved from the chair—you win her and the champeenship of the world!"

Van Dyke stops, breathless, and Knockout Burns stirs in his chair.

"And *then* what?" he says.

Four guys grabbed our charmin' director, but not before he had throwed the telephone book at Knockout's head. "Take 'at big stiff outa here, or I'll cook

him!" shrieks Van Dyke, reachin' for his back pocket —and Knockout Burns breezed.

Bright and early the next mornin'—that is, the mornin' was bright and we was early—we start shootin' "Kid Roberts, Undisputed Champion Heavyweight Boxer of the World, supported by a Super-Cast in the Super-Production, THE KNOCKOUT. The Greatest Moving Picture Since Mona Lisa Disappeared!"

Both me and the fascinatin' Knockout Burns was drafted for this frolic, prob'ly to keep us quiet. I took off the exactin' role of a spectator in the big fight scene. They hired a regular actor to play the Kid's manager, on account of 'em havin' several important scenes together. Can you imagine that, with *me* right there in person? Knockout Burns was one of the supers of the Super-Production. That day we also had the pleasure of meetin' the assistant villain, to the viz., the guy which the Kid was scheduled to knock for a row of ash cans in the film brawl. Accordin' to the recipe for the movie, this bimbo was merely a slight ingredient, but before we got through he promoted himself to actin' chief scoundrel and ruffian plenipotentiary.

Van Dyke comes over to us, plastered with grins.

"Well, we're certain lucky!" he says. "I got Young Hamilton to play that fight scene with you, Kid. I wanted a man who looks like a fighter—in fact, who *is* a fighter—and yet has some intelligence—no offense, Kid, no offense—and I got him!"

"If you wanted a guy which looks like a fighter and *is* a fighter, what's the matter with me, hey?" says Knockout Burns.

Van Dyke snorts.

"He's also got to look like a human bein'!" he answers. Then he turns to us: "Of course you know Young Hamilton?"

"I'm afraid not," says the Kid.

"I think I smacked a guy down in a round at Butte last year by that name," remarks Knockout.

"You never smacked *this* baby down!" says Van Dyke. "Young Hamilton was amateur heavyweight champ of the Coast for two years—up to last year, in fact—when somebody picked him for a type in a picture and since then he's done pretty well for himself on the different lots. He's just finished a picture with Stella Sweetish and I'm gonna sew him to a contract when he gets through with yours. But the point is Hamilton was never stopped as a amateur, he's always in condition and he can give you a pretty stiff argument for enough footage to make it look good. And this here prize fight has got to look like a *fight,* get me? Boxin' fans all over the country are gonna flock to see this picture and you and me knows that the rest of the filum will run for the end book—what they're comin' to see is the heavyweight champ action with gloves on in a ring! Unless this fight knocks 'em off their seats right into the aisles, they're gonna laugh me to death, and it won't do *you* no good either, Kid. Well, I'm gonna drive them cuckoo with this box fight you can bet your left lung on *that* part of it! Fight scenes is my dish—I made my reputation on 'em and I'm gonna goal 'em with this one. Two weeks after I release this baby, they'll have

forgot whether Griffith makes movies or biscuits! Now—wait a minute, here's Hamilton."

He calls across the lot and Monsieur Hamilton steps away from some girls he was chattin' with and strolls over.

I liked this bird at the go in and I know the Kid did. Perhaps if it hadn't been for ravishin' Nada Nice we might of all become pals. It only goes to show how a good-looker can ball everything up, as Adam was heard to mutter on the ways out of the Garden of Eden.

Except for the telltale dent in his beak, Hamilton looked no more like a pug than the Kid did—in fact, they was much the same type. He was every bit as big as Roberts, about the same age, and with all his disarmin', white-toothed, kid grin he had a rugged businesslike appearance. Hamilton looked genuinely tickled to shake hands with the world's champion and said so, and him and the Kid was gettin' along first-class, with little Van Dyke rubbin' his hands together and tellin' 'em to get used to each other, when along come Nada. Without no preliminaries she hooks her arm in Hamilton's, flashes him a dazzlin' smile, and, completely ignorin' the rest of us, tells him to come on and show her the breathin' exercises he was tellin' her about. Hamilton gets a bit red, stammers a apology, hesitates—and she drags him off, flickin' a short, cold glance at the Kid. Van Dyke looks after 'em, frownin'.

"Eh—don't mind Nada, Kid, she's always that way," he says. "You know these stars—gotta humor 'em.

Eh—she's just like a baby—don't mean a thing wrong by that—eh—maybe a bit peeved over—well, I gotta run along. Be in callin' distance!"

And he beats it.

Right away I get a chill. I was wishin' Miss Dolores Brewster was in Loose Angeles, believe me!

Knockout Burns clears his throat.

"This Hamilton guy," he snarls. "Where does he rate that stuff? Amateur champ, hey? Well, there's one bozo I can take and I'm tellin' North America that me and that bird will go to the post before we knock off work here! Where does he fit to grab off that Jane, hey? "

Poor Knockout Burns. The only guy which didn't figure at all!

Still lookin' after Hamilton and Nada, the Kid has a odd, half smile on his face.

"It must be that this Nada person thinks you don't like her, Kid, hey?" I remarks uneasily.

"No," says the Kid, suddenly showin' astonishin' shrewdness. "It's because she thinks I *do!*" Then he laughs and speaks kinda to himself: "This will amuse Dolores—Lord, I'll have a *book* to write her to-night!"

I guess he was safe, hey?

Well, boys and girls, I got to admit that, as a movie star, Kid Roberts was a wonderful box fighter! The boy screened as well as Mary Pickford's husband, but he was no actor and that was that. This make-believe stuff hit him as bein' the height of ridiculous, and he'd come in for his rub-down after a tough day before

the camera, cussin' me for signin' him up as a matinee idol and remarkin' that never before in his life had he felt like such a darn fool. They had a terrible time gettin' him to use make-up, and when Nada Nice first throwed her soft arms around his manly neck, as per the scenario, you could see the glow from the Kid's face in Brazil. This brung a sneer from Nada and a involuntary giggle from Hamilton—his first mistake.

But it was in the fight-scene rehearsals that Kid Roberts showed he was not born for the movies. The champ had never stalled in his life and he couldn't stall now—that is, he couldn't pull the wallops he sent at Hamilton or flop to the mat as if he'd been floored with a punch and make either of 'em look like the real thing. He was no faker, and of course he was careful not to hurt Hamilton, with the result that many's the foot of film was throwed away on bouts which wouldn't of give a fight fan any more thrill than you give a ex-manicurist when you ask her can you hold her hand. Van Dyke tore his hair and raved all over the lot, but they was nothin' stirrin'. The Kid wouldn't take advantage of Hamilton and tear into him for real and he wasn't enough of a actor to fake the thing well, so, as the French remarks, what would you?

Right here I would like to say that this Monsieur Hamilton was far from a set-up for any man. Big, rugged, fast, in perfect condition, and a two-handed puncher, he looked capable of extendin' the Kid in *any* kind of a fight. As far as that part of it goes, they's plenty of husky, clever guys, which never

fought for pennies in their lives but could make things interestin' if they had to for any of our champs from fly-weight to heavy—as many's the professional leather pusher has found out!

One mornin' Kid Roberts and Young Hamilton is rehearsin' this fight scene with Van Dyke dancin' around 'em bellerin' for action and screamin' that they're mixin' it like a pair of room-mates, when suddenly the little director stops in disgust and calls it off for the day. *I* thought the boys was goin' unusually good, but Van Dyke wanted a murder. As the Kid passes me on the ways to the shower, I notice a small lump on his right cheek bone and, in some surprise, I remarked on it.

"This fellow is tough!" grins the Kid, noddin' over his shoulder at Hamilton. Van Dyke grabs his arm.

"Look here!" he says, lowerin' his voice. "There's no use of us wastin' time and money rehearsin' this thing any longer. I'm gonna shoot the fight scene in a couple of days, and when I give you the office *I want you to knock Hamilton stiff—get me?* No fakin' this time, understand; let him have it! It ain't gonna *kill* him and he's gettin' well paid for it. I'll get a *coupla* good shots out of the thing, anyways!"

The Kid shakes the hand off his arm and regards him coldly.

"You're a poor judge of type, Van Dyke," he says. "Of course, I will do nothing of the sort!"

Van Dyke give a short, nasty little laugh as the Kid passes on.

"Nevertheless," he says, presentin' me with a funny look. "Nevertheless, he's gonna knock Hamilton out!"

At this interestin' point Knockout Burns come slouchin' up with a old sweater throwed over his shoulders, ready for his daily workout with the Kid. He sees Hamilton, also in ring togs, talkin' to Nada Nice, which same is lookin' up into the big fellow's face like it was the Garden of the Gods and she was gettin' her first flash at it. Knockout growls and his thick upper lip draws away from the snaggled teeth underneath.

"Look at the big goof," he sneers, talkin' to me, but purposely raisin' his voice. "Always posin' in front of some skirt! I wisht they'd let *me* step a couple of frames with that bozo—you can tell Russia *I* wouldn't hold him up like the Kid does. Maybe I ain't no world's champion or the like, but I'm champion of *that* guy, anyways!"

A couple of birds looked around curiously and a camera man laughed. I seen Nada's eyes sparkle as Hamilton stared at Knockout Burns and then back at her. He forced a smile and just for a instant a look flashed in Nada's eyes—the look that is a woman's way of callin' you whatever particular name makes you want to kill! Hamilton walks over to Knockout Burns and deliberately looks him up and down.

"Ah—like to—ah—warm up a bit, while you're waitin' for your—ah—master?" he says, coolly enough.

Knockout Burns tore the sweater off his shoulders with one snatch, licked his lips, and says "Aaaaah!" with the relish of a rummy downin' a suddenly discovered shot of bonded hooch.

Right then I went off Nada Nice for life! For from that minute this Young Hamilton, which both me

and the Kid was beginnin' to like, was changed from a good guy to a nasty, grand-stand playin', insultin' fathead which wasn't cured till—but wait!

Into the ring where a little while before Kid Roberts and Hamilton had been rehearsin' their phony fight climbs Nada's boy friend and Knockout Burns. Carpenters, camera men, supers, electricians, and what not dropped what ever they was doin', of course, and crowded around 'em, and they was plenty more come a runnin' from all parts of the lot. Nada, how the so ever, took the air.

Well, I figured here was a good opportunity to see what Hamilton really had and just how much of a chance the Kid was takin' with him. Knockout Burns was a tough old battle-scarred veteran of hundreds of gory mêlées. He packed a wicked right and had stopped a lot of good men before Kid Roberts cut him short with a one-round knockout on the champ's way to the top. I decided I'd stop the bout the first time Hamilton looked in trouble, as I didn't want the young man punished by anybody connected with us. With that in mind, I hopped over the ropes and asked 'em both if they was any objection to me refereein'. Knockout laughed, and Hamilton, after a glance at me which was very brief but likewise very penetratin', shrugs his shoulders and says it was O. K. with him.

Van Dyke, chargin' into the ring with a gang of huskies, stopped the fight in the second round whilst I was tollin' off the fatal seconds over a dazed and battered heavyweight, which, restin' on one knee,

was waitin' to hear "nine" before resumin' a hopeless argument. The heavy's name was Knockout Burns.

Boys and girls, you ain't no more surprised than I was. Any doubts I had with the regard to Young Hamilton's ability as a box fighter vanished in the first round of that short brawl. The ex-amateur champ made a monkey out of Burns—made this tough bird look absolutely silly. He glided around the enraged Knockout, pepperin' him with stingin' rights and lefts, bringin' him up gaspin' with vicious smashes to the heart and wind, feintin' him into futile knots, pickin' off his well-meant returns whilst they was still in the air, and then, goin' out to finish his man in the second round, he floored him twice before Van Dyke stopped it. Half a dozen guys was required to hold Burns, which raved, cussed, and begged to have the bout go on. He bellered that he wasn't hurt, that he was just gettin' warmed up, and that he always looked bad in the first couple of rounds on account of not bein' a boxer, but a slugger—all of which was true. But Van Dyke waved him away, threatenin' to bar him from the lot if he didn't get off the scene. However, when I caught the little director's eye, he looked to me to be tickled silly.

Kid Roberts was very sore when he heard about this muss and bawled out Knockout Burns to a fare-thee-well, promisin' to can him if he started anything with anybody else whilst we was there. Then the Kid apologized to Hamilton for Knockout's runnin' amuck, and Hamilton, no longer the laughin', good-natured kid, smiled faintly, murmured somethin' about bein'

able to take care of himself, and walked away. Kid Roberts raised his eyebrows, but says nothin'.

As the time drawed near for the filmin' of the large fight scene, the indications was that a excitin' time would be had by all. The Kid's nerves had been about shot to pieces by the constant abuse of little Van Dyke regardin' his actin' and the deliberate, silent contempt with which Nada Nice treated him when they wasn't workin' together. Young Hamilton had got so upstage you couldn't talk to him at all, and it was plain and also amusin' to everybody on the lot that he had went cuckoo over Nada, which seemed to take that fact for granted—bein' the type of Jane which cannot understand why every guy she meets don't go out and commit suicide at the thoughts of havin' to live without her.

Knockout Burns kept after Hamilton every time they got within speakin' distance on the lot and the Kid wasn't around. He rode that boy from mornin' till night, darin' him to slip out somewheres and go to the post with him again, callin' him a quitter and a big false alarm which he would murder if he ever got him in a ring for a finish fight. Lookin' back, I often wonder how Hamilton stood it, but stand it he did, contentin' himself with merely smilin' sarcastically at the blah-blahin' Knockout and never a word of a comeback. Frequently the Knockout's remarks got so raw that I shut him up myself, but beyond a tightenin' of jaw and a glintin' of eye once or twice, Hamilton never give him a tumble.

The day they're goin' to shoot the fight between the Kid and Hamilton, which winds up the picture, I'm

stumblin' around through the scenes on one of the stages wishin' it was all over, when I hear the voices of Hamilton and Nada Nice. I am not no keyhole listener, but they was talkin' about Kid Roberts, and without no apologies I will tell you that I stopped for a earful.

"—It would be too crooked!" Hamilton's sayin'. "I don't want to even think about it, Nada. The way to do that would be to challenge Roberts openly and meet him in a fair fight, where he'd know I was doing my best to win. This way it's— Oh, it's all wrong! He'll be unprepared, unsuspecting—no, I don't want to do anything like that. If it wasn't for the fact that I've got to play my part in this thing to-day, pretend he has knocked me out, I'd—well, Nada, I'd *whip* him—a thing that I'm as sure I can do as I am that my name is Hamilton!"

"And be heavyweight champion of the world—with all the fame and fortune that goes with it!" breathes this vamp, and I can imagine the eye work she's doin' on friend Hamilton. "Well, do as you like," she goes on, in a voice that was like a kiss. "I don't want you to think I would suggest anything—er—wrong. But if I were a man and had this opportunity—"

Her voice trails off suddenly and I hear a new one—Van Dyke's.

"Hello, folks!" he greets 'em. "Nada—over on that drawin' room set for yours. I want a close-up of you and Kid Roberts before he starts for the ring. Hurry up, I'll be right over—got somethin' to tell Hamilton."

I hear Nada trippin' away and then Van Dyke again.

"Hamilton," he says, almost in a whisper, "look out for yourself in this fight with Kid Roberts. I got this straight from headquarters and it's no josh. This big stiff is sore at the way you trimmed his sparrin' partner, and, well—you know how Nada's acted—and *he's gonna try and deliberately cut you to pieces to give the gang a laugh!* Watch your step and—"

Hamilton cuts in.

"All right—thanks!" he says. "I'll watch out and—you watch *me!* This is better than I hoped for and I'm going to give this fellow the surprise of his life!"

On top of Hamilton's retreatin' footsteps come Van Dyke's short laugh, and then I stepped from behind the scenery, right into him. He changed colors like a lizard and greatly reminded me of one, for that matter.

"What's the big idea?" I snarls. "Come on, make it snappy and don't stall—I heard the whole layout! Are you tryin' to frame Kid Roberts, you little rat? You know the Kid's got no idea of knockin' Hamilton's head off. Why, he'd no more hurt that guy than he'd—"

"That's what's the matter!" butts in Van Dyke excitedly. "That's exactly the trouble! But if Hamilton comes at him doin' his best, why, the Kid will *have* to knock his head off, won't he?"

"He *might* have to stop him—yes," I admits. "But—"

"But nothin'!" says Van Dyke. "You got *some* brains, ain't you? You know what depends on this fight scene bein' a riot—why, it's the kick to the whole picture! If it flops, good-bye money, my reputation, yes, and a good part of your champ's rep, too. Fight

fans out in the sticks which never seen Roberts start, and never will, are gonna see him in this movie, and if he looks bad, you know what they'll say. Another thing, what happens to your percentage of the picture's earnin's if the thing's a bust? And a bust it will be if the Kid and Young Hamilton don't put up a rip-roarin', two-fisted, he-man battle! You seen them rehearse time after time and you also seen how terrible they both was in the scene—each scared to death he'd muss the other one's hair. D'ye think I'd release a bust like that with *my* name on it? Not on your life! I'm gonna shoot a fight to-day that will put a permanent marcel in their hair! What d'ye suppose Nada's been cuttin' Roberts and eggin' Hamilton on for? What d'ye suppose I told him the Kid was out to take him for, heh? What d'ye—"

"Wait a minute!" I says. "D'ye mean to tell me that Nada Nice has upstaged the Kid and lured this poor boob Hamilton on at your orders?"

"Nada knows the situation," he stalls. "Why *shouldn't* she do what she can to help me? I *made* that girl! I'm her director, ain't I?"

"Well," I says, after a bit, "you certainly win the tissue-paper nail file! In order to make your movie a success, you take a chance on Kid Roberts gettin' his head—" and then I stopped.

"The Kid ain't takin' no chance at all!" he sneers, readin' my thoughts. "Why, he should dispose of this guy with ease—he's champion of the world, ain't he?"

"Yes, but—" I begins, but get no chance.

"And another thing you wanna remember, fellah,"

goes on Van Dyke, " is that this ain't only *my* movie, it's yours and his also! Of course, if you think your champ will get mussed up and you wanna crab this thing, go to it. If you tell Kid Roberts, it's all off, because the big—because he'll refuse to knock Hamilton dead. This Roberts is a hot sketch for a fighter, anyways!"

"But look here, Stupid," I says. "If I don't wise the Kid up, how d'ye expect him to put up a sure enough battle?"

"Hamilton will take care of that part of it," grins Van Dyke. "When this baby steps into that ring, Kid Roberts will *have* to fight!"

What was I gonna do? If I crabbed the thing, the story that Kid Roberts had refused to box Young Hamilton, the ex-amateur champ, etc., would travel from California to Florida overnight. I shut up and walked back with Van to the others, through with the movies—jack or no jack!

We breezed over to where the Kid, Nada, Hamilton, and the rest of the gang is waitin' and after some close-ups of Nada in the Kid's arms have been shot, Van Dyke gives Roberts and Hamilton their final directions for the battle. With a wink at Hamilton which the Kid don't see, Van Dyke remarks that he hopes the champion won't lose his temper and knock Hamilton for a goal. Kid Roberts innocently grins and turns to the scowlin' ex-amateur champ.

"Don't mind him, old man," he says, "I'll be as careful as—"

Hamilton cuts him off with a snarl.

"Oh, never mind that stuff," he says sneerin'ly.

"You do your best, Roberts—for *I* certainly shall!"

This was too much for Knockout Burns.

"Why, you big goof!" he yells, "Kid Roberts'll bust you in half! You're gonna try, eh? Well, if you want action I got a thousand bucks which says I can knock you stiff inside ten rounds. C'mon, less go, you four-flusher!"

"Shut up, Burns!" says the Kid, his quiet gaze never leavin' Hamilton's flushed face. "I'm very sorry you feel that way, Hamilton. Perhaps we had better postpone this scene until you're in better humor. It's rather dangerous for two *big* men to—"

Nada shot a meanin' glance at Hamilton, and her nasty laugh shut the Kid off right in the middle as Van Dyke butts in with:

"We don't postpone nothin'! I got a fight club leased for this scene and a mob of extry people gettin' five bucks the each—seven for the ones with dress suits—waitin'. C'mon, pile into them autos outside and forget it!"

Suddenly Hamilton pulls a mechanical smile, mumbles a apology, and offers the Kid his hand. They shake, but the ex-amateur champ was lookin' away when he done it—lookin' over the Kid's shoulder at Nada Nice.

A hour or so later Kid Roberts and Young Hamilton is climbin' through the ropes in a regulation ring at the old West Coast A. C. whilst a battery of movie cameras is grindin' out their every move and every move of a crowd which packed the joint to the roof. On a high stool beside the ring, and out of range of

the cameras, Van Dyke is perched, directin' through a megaphone. Near by sits Nada Nice, chattin' with friends, ready to appear in the Kid's corner for the climax. She looked like she hadn't a care in the world—and prob'ly hadn't. All around the edge of the ring is the newspaper guys, tickled silly to come and get a real line on the champion's present condition; back of them the supers in dress suits and evenin' gowns, and behind them a bunch of society guys and their girl friends, invited with engraved cards by Van Dyke, and there out of curiosity to see a movie made. The supers is tryin' to act like society leaders, and the society leaders is tryin' to act like supers. Kid Roberts is grinnin' and chattin' with the newspaper guys, answerin' a fire of questions about his next fight and the like, but across the ring Hamilton is drawn and nervous, his eyes on the floor.

"Lights!" bellers Van Dyke, and a distinct hush fell over the mob. "Ready, camera—all right, Roberts, Hamilton—shoot!"

Clang!—the bell just like the real thing, and they're off.

Both men come to the center of the ring, touched gloves lightly, and begin sparrin', as they'd rehearsed over and over. Hamilton suddenly chopped his right to the head and then hooked the same glove to the jaw as the Kid started to back away. The champ boxed cautiously for a few seconds, landin' lightly with both hands, and Hamilton drove him against the ropes with a torrid left to the body. Lookin' surprised, Roberts clinched, and the wise newspaper guys begin to sit up

straight in their seats. I can't remember when my throat was ever so dry before! They slid along the ropes, Hamilton fightin' with one arm free, diggin' his glove into the kidneys and short ribs. The referee, a assistant director, broke them on orders from Van Dyke, and the Kid put a slow left to the head, apologizin' when the heel of the glove scraped skin from Hamilton's ear. The ex-amateur champ's reply was a volley of lefts and rights that gave the Kid all he could do for a minute, and then Van Dyke shouts through the megaphone:

"Now, Roberts, you drop your hands and stagger away—you been doped, and here's where you get knocked down—that's good—that's fine! Hamilton, get ready to swing your right—don't watch the camera—you think you're on the verge of knockin' the champion out—that's right, try and look it! Now, Hamilton—cop him—on the chest will do; it'll look like a punch from here—ready now—all right drop your hands, Roberts, drop your—"

Kid Roberts obediently lowers his guard, and, quick as a flash, Hamilton pastes him—not on the chest, *but square on the point of the jaw, and the Kid goes down like a log!*

"Cut!" hollers Van Dyke. "That's great—wonderful! *I'll* give these birds a movie!"

Mutterin' apologies, Hamilton bends down and helps the Kid to his feet, whilst twelve assistants of Van Dyke grabs me and shoves me back out of the ring, which I had reached in one frenzied jump, hollerin' that nobody's allowed on the set whilst Van Dyke's shootin'. The crowd gives Hamilton a big hand as he walks to

his stool, and Nada waves her hand to him. Van Dyke is grinnin' happily. Whilst Knockout Burns and the other handlers is workin' over Kid Roberts, I lashed out with both hands, clearin' a space and managed to crawl through the ropes to the Kid's side.

"Kid—this is a frame-up!" I panted in his ear. "I ain't got time to tell you all of it now, but knock this guy dead and knock him quick! He's tryin' to put you away, and—"

"Nonsense!" smiles the Kid. "The boy lost his head, that's all. I'm not hurt; the punch was too high, and I was falling when I got it, you know. Hamilton's probably sorrier than I am that he landed. The thing was an unavoidable accident. Forget it!"

Van Dyke comes over and shoves past me. "Everything's goin' fine!" he tells the Kid, slappin' his shoulder. "Now this is the last round. Remember, you get floored twice, then Nada appears at the foot of the ropes—you see her—get up, rush Hamilton, and knock the big bu—that is, he'll fall through the ropes like he was cracked—see?"

The Kid nods and Van Dyke calls Hamilton over. They's a mattress on the floor outside the ropes so's he won't get hurt when he goes through 'em, and Van Dyke makes him and the Kid rehearse the thing once more without the cameras. I thought they did it pretty well, and the society bunch clapped their hands off. Then Van Dyke calls for lights and cameras, the bell rings, and they begin the thrillin' climax.

Thrillin' was right!

The minute they met in the middle of the ring Hamilton throws all pretenses to the breeze and give

himself up to the job of knockin' Kid Roberts for a row of silos. Van Dyke called out the rehearsed blows to him, but the ex-amateur champ, with murder in his eyes, paid no attention, and before the round was a minute old he had the Kid doin' his best, and everybody in the place knowed they was seein' a finish fight and not no movie! The Kid missed a left jab, and Hamilton opened a old cut over his eye with a vicious right, puttin' a straight left to the same place before the amazed Roberts could block. I had to admire this Hamilton's speed, even though I would of liked to cooked him then and there! Roberts brought him up standin' with a right to the heart, but a instant later Hamilton made the champ open his mouth and gasp with two hard smashes to the wind. Van Dyke now yelled hysterically for the Kid to take his first fall, and, backin' away from the rushin' Hamilton, Roberts slid clumsily to the floor. At once the house rocked with the boos of the excited mob, society bunch and all. The only way I can explain the thing that happened next is that Hamilton went cuckoo at the chance to knock out the world's champion—for he swung a wicked right to the Kid's head as he was gettin' up off the floor, sprawlin' the champ flat on his back. The assistant director, which was "referee," was nuts himself with the thrill of the thing and forgot to count, but the newspaper guys willin'ly obliged. The Kid took "nine," and when he come up they was everything but mercy in his hard, glitterin' gray eyes.

I hadn't watched Hamilton work for nothin', and when the Kid's anxious gaze searched and found mine in the mob I screamed over the din: "Make him lead

to you, Kid!" and Roberts immediately feinted Hamilton into swingin' his right. As the punch started, the champ slid in under it and hooked both hands to the jaw, followin' that with a left to the body that all but doubled Hamilton in two. The ex-amateur star now begin back-pedalin' all over the ring with the Kid on top of him, jabbin' his head back and forth with his beautiful straight left and playin' for a openin' for his deadly right.

As per the scenario, Nada appears at the edge of the ring, wavin' her arms and shoutin' to attract the Kid's attention, but the Kid was terrible busy just then! Van Dyke swings his megaphone around and bawls somethin' in her ear. Nada smiles and at once begins yellin'—*yellin' for Hamilton to knock the Kid out!* Roberts stops dead, turns slowly and looks at her with a most peculiar expression on his face. The watchin' Hamilton plunges in with a right uppercut that buckled the Kid's knees under him and sent the mob insane. Likewise me! They mixed it furiously near Hamilton's corner and Van Dyke bellers for the ex-amateur champ to fall through the ropes. Hamilton sneers at him and hooked his left hard to the Kid's mouth, bringin' the blood. The place was now in a wild uproar and neither of 'em paid any attention to the bell, but stood toe to toe, sluggin' with both hands. Hamilton was the first to break ground and the Kid raised a lump on his jaw with a overhand right swing that sent him spinnin' to the ropes. He rebounded into a right that tore his ear and dove into a clinch, but the Kid jerked himself free and split the ex-amateur champ's nose with a left chop. Both then missed

rights to the head and Roberts again put his left to the sore nose. Hamilton looked very tired and tried to make the Kid box with him, but Roberts was impatient to end matters and peppered his man with short, joltin' lefts and rights to the wind, wearin' him down so's to get a fair crack at the jaw. The chance come fin'ly when a smash over the heart doubled Hamilton up. The Kid coolly jabbed a openin' with his left, measured the punch-drunk ex-amateur champ and with a right uppercut to the button sent him crashin' through the ropes as advertised—and it wasn't on the side of the ring where the mattress was, either!

The mob is millin' out through the doors, havin' been furnished with somethin' to talk about for months, and we're all gathered about Hamilton which is sittin' on his stool, just comin' to life. Knockout Burns pushes through the jam to his side.

"Well, you big double-crossin' tramp!" he snarls at the beaten Hamilton. "Are you satisfied *now,* eh? Woof—what a proper pastin' you drawed for yourself! It takes a lickin' like that to show you false alarms where you git off. I bet you won't look at a boxin' glove again till the day you die. It's a good thing *I* wasn't in there with you, I'd of cut you to ribbons, just to be nasty!"

Hamilton looks up at Burns, starin' him steadily in the eye like he's tryin' to remember where he seen him before. Then his teeth comes together with a click, he gets up slowly and pushes away the guys which wants to help him.

"Put up your hands!" he says huskily.

"Why, you—" begins the astonished Burns—and

never finished, for Hamilton shot straight out with his bandaged right hand and Knockout Burns sagged a second and then toppled in a heap at my feet!

So that was all settled.

"Roberts," says Hamilton, unsteadily, facin' the cold-eyed Kid, "I—I—was a fool! However, I guess I've paid for it. I—I—lost my head— No, damn it, I'll be square with you! I went in there determined to knock you out and I deserve all I got, but—I have never done anything like this in my life before—never tried to double-cross anyone and—and I feel rotten about it! Will you accept my sincere apology—*please?*"

The Kid looks him over and grins. "Why of course!" he says, shakin' his hand warmly. "It's forgotten, old boy. I don't blame you in a way—it was a big chance and then there was—" He looks around meanin'ly to where Nada Nice and Van Dyke is in earnest conversation. Van Dyke waves his hand and calls over: "A wonderful picture—wonderful! This thing will *make* you, Hamilton!" and goes right on talkin' to Nada again.

"By the way," says Hamilton, "I—ah—pardon my curiosity, but what is your real *real* name? I mean, I know it isn't Kid Roberts; all fighters adopt a ring—"

"I'm Kane Halliday, out of the ring," says the Kid.

"Cain?" hollers Hamilton, in a voice that made everybody look around at us. "By gad, no wonder you licked *me!*"

"Why?" asks the Kid

"Don't you know?" roars Hamilton. *"My name is Abel*—Abel Hamilton!"

No, boys and girls, Hamilton didn't wed the charmin' Nada Nice. You see, she happened to be Van Dyke's wife.

And, as J. Caesar remarked as he waded the Rubicon, there's *that!*

ROUND ELEVEN

STRIKE FATHER, STRIKE SON!

No matter how nifty he is with his hands, a box fighter without absolute confidence in his ability to weather whatever unexpected hurricane of smashin' wallops he may run into durin' the course of a muss is a box fighter without no good reason for remainin' in a tough game. He may outpoint the clumsy, slow-thinkin' dumb-bells, but the hard-boiled baby which can take it and grimly wait till the openin' comes for one solid smash has the edge on this guy every time. The faint-hearted bird is no good *when* he's hurt; the real fighter is no good *till* he's hurt! In other words, the clever but weak-spirited boxer is usually a world beater among the tramps and a tramp among the world beaters.

But confidence, boys and girls, is a heady drink—too much is as dangerous to success as too little. You want to dilute it a bit, reduce its high proof with a little respect for the other guy's chances. Instead of thinkin' that every cuckoo and every situation you're called upon to face in this game called life is a set-up for you, allow leeway for the unreckoned break, the bolt from the blue, the chance that you might slip on the banana peel Fate or be flattened by the thunder-

bolt Chance. Give plenty of play for the unnervin' unexpected and—it won't be!

Like the forbidden hooch, confidence has its deadly, high-powered bootleg imitation in Conceit. This often looks like the original, 100-proof bonded stuff—the difference is in the effect. Confidence steadies the ladder of Fame for you and makes the long climb easier. Conceit hides the holes between the rungs, with the results that you fall through.

And now, girls and boys, havin' got all that off my chest, here's a incident in the sensational career of Kid Roberts, which I would like to place before the jury as a good example of all the above.

Within a month after Kid Roberts has finished elevatin' the deaf-and-dumb drama by makin' that movie in which he knocked everybody cold includin' the exhibitors, we have signed for two bouts under the personal direction of Jimmy McManus, the Tex Rickard of his day. We are to get $150,000 for the first muss no matter what happens, and the same amount for the second—provided the Kid is still heavyweight champion. In other words, if we lose our first start, that's all there is, there isn't any more, as Ethel Barrymore was once heard to remark.

Jack Enright, a two-hundred-pounder from New Orleans, which had flashed to the front by the difficult process of winnin' all his brawls in a couple of rounds, and Marty McCabe, another tough bird, hailin' from Seattle, was the Kid's most persistent challengers. It has been almost a year since the Kid win the title, and in that time he hadn't defended it once. So either Enright or McCabe, both goin' great guns and fightin'

two or three times a month, looked worth a bet against the champ to all the wise crackers. All but me. *I* figured the Kid could climb into a ring with the two of 'em and knock 'em *both* dead!

Followin' several weeks of felonious assault on each other in the newspapers, Enright and McCabe is matched to mingle for twenty frames, the winner to get first crack at Kid Roberts and the world's heavyweight championship. This mêlée attracted no more attention than the invasion of Belgium, and by the time the brawny young men clambered into the ring to toss gloves at each other you couldn't of bought your way inside the clubhouse had your name been Jack Rockefeller.

Me and Kid Roberts was among the important guests, jammed right up against the lower ropes with the workin' sport writers, and after the announcer has lashed the customers into a murderous rage by introducin' everybody but Christopher Columbus, his eyes falls on Kid Roberts. In another minute the Kid is bein' helped through the ropes in his dazzlin dress suit, without which he wouldn't even go to the corner for a newspaper after six p. m.

The announcer got as far as "We have with us tonight—" when the roar killed him off and he quit. The mob had been sittin' for hours waitin' for Enright and McCabe to start in killin' each other. It was on edge and didn't want to meet *nobody*. Again, Kid Roberts hadn't defended his title for a year, and no champion can hold his popularity which don't fight early and often. The Kid's dress suit hit 'em all wrong, too. They wanted to see him in a business suit—fightin'

trunks and four-ounce gloves. So that Kid Roberts, standin' there white and hard-faced, heard the thing that every champ from Jem Mace to Jack Dempsey has heard sooner or later from the fickle mob—the long-drawn-out, vicious "Booooo!" drownin' out the cheers of the hysterical.

And, listen—don't think that stuff don't *hurt!*

This was all new and very painful to the Kid. He'd been used to a thunder of cheers wherever he showed his face. The raspberry was a fruit he had never tasted before, and the darn thing went to his head. Anyways, he stood lookin' out at the roarin' Atlantic of faces for a minute, curled his lip like he was sayin' "You poor fatheads!" and then, walkin' to Enright's corner, picked up his bandaged hand and shook it, politely wishin' him luck. He done the same thing to McCabe. Neither of 'em give him a tumble.

Back beside me, the Kid sneers: "Did you hear those fools jeering me?"

I hunched my shoulders and settled in the seat. "What do you care?" I says. "Now—"

"I'll win my next fight with a punch!" he goes on, smilin' nastily. "Just to show them the difference between a champion and"—he nods at Enright and McCabe—"and those thick-skulled bruisers there!"

"Well, les' forget it now and watch this one," I says, as the handlers begin scramblin' out of the ring. But I was bothered! The Kid had *never* done no braggin' before. Just the opposite—he'd concede a cripple a chance with him till the thing was over. This stuff was all new. I gazed at him sidewise, and he was lollin' back in his seat watchin' Enright

and McCabe, one of which he'd have to battle within the next six months, like they was a couple of amateurs in a gym. When he taps a yawn back into his mouth, I got a chill. Before we filed out of that clubhouse I was chilled to the bone!

With a sigh of pure joy, the crowd has leaned forward at the bell, breathin' hard and set for a long, tough battle, with the result a toss-up. A mankillin' slugger against a master boxer. Scheduled for twenty frames, seven or eight rounds of bloodcurdlin' millin' before one of 'em hit the mat seemed a cinch. As they came to the center, McCabe was short with a straight left, and Enright put a wicked right to the head, scrapin' the lace of his glove on the skin as he flicked it away.

"This guy's a dirty scrapper, Kid," I whispers.

"I'll make him clean!" scowls the Kid. "It won't even be a contest when *I* get him. Look, he's as open as a novice—I'll stop this fellow with the first one I try!"

Again I felt a nervous shiver, but I got no chance for a comeback because the gladiators was goin' to it with a right good will, as the sayin' is. Stung by the mob's yells, McCabe shook himself and begin dancin' around the clumsy Enright, stabbin' him in the face with a long, punishin' left. A few seconds of this and Enright's features is gory and purplin', and one eye has observed the early-closin' law. He missed a couple of vicious right swings, and then, followin' the shriekin' advice of his handlers, he begins to bull his way in to close quarters. This early and prob'ly unlooked-for success made McCabe a bit too

confident. He let Enright come in and, shiftin' his attack to the body, grinned jovially and pounded the wind with one arm free, the other protectin' himself. As the referee run over to break 'em, Enright's terrible right come up in a half circle, smashed through a openin' and clipped McCabe on the chin. McCabe's knees sagged, and a goofy look spread over his face. The mob's yell rocked the buildin'. Quick as a flash, Enright's left flicked up around McCabe's neck, the glove droppin' with a thud just as the pantin' referee shoved 'em apart. McCabe fell with a crash, his face hittin' first.

He was still there at "ten." He was still there half a hour later when the disgusted, grumblin' crowd had milled out of the clubhouse. He was still there two hours after that, when another kind of a boxer—the undertaker—come to take him and his broken neck away from the perspirin' medicos and the dumfounded, white-faced club officials.

"Well," I says to the Kid as we climb into his car on the en route to the hotel, "d'ye still think Enright's a set-up?"

"Why not?" he says. "This tragedy to-night doesn't change my opinion a particle! I grant you Enright can hit—that short right uppercut that literally tore poor McCabe's head off would have felled an ox—but he isn't going to hit *me* with it, that's all. I've stopped a dozen men who could hit as hard as Enright, haven't I?"

"As *hard*—yes," I agrees, noddin' my head and gazin' out at the town generally. Then I looked back at him.

"Kid," I says, "since we first hooked up three years ago till we win the heavyweight title, we have took 'em all on regardless of color, weight, religion, or rep. We have ducked nobody. The only reason we ain't gone to the post with the Rock of Gibraltar is because they is no way to get boxin' gloves on it! I *know* you can take Enright, and I *think* you can stop any heavy which ever rubbed a foot in rosin and stop 'em the best day they ever seen. Nevertheless and but, we ain't goin' to fight Enright, and the newspapers can howl their heads off!"

Kid Roberts laughs good-naturedly. "Why—because he killed McCabe?" he asks, like he's humorin' a child.

"Exactly!" I says. "Because he killed McCabe, he likewise murdered his chance at the heavyweight title."

"Why, you fool!" says the Kid, becomin' excited, "do you think a thing like that would ever happen to Enright again—that he'd kill a man with a punch? It was an accident—an unfortunate accident, pure and simple. He—"

"The same kind of a accident as sunrise is!" I butts in. "Look here, just what do you think happened in that ring to-night? Just tell me how *you* got the knockout punch figured."

"There's nothing difficult about that," says the Kid. "You saw it. They were clinched when Enright landed a right uppercut, McCabe going down as the referee broke them. In falling, the poor devil's head hit a poorly padded bit of ring planking and, as the newspaper boys figure it, his head struck with sufficient

force to break his neck. Same thing that killed Luther McCarthy, you know. I'll never forget Enright's expression—he was thunderstruck!"

"Thunderstruck, your great-grand-aunt!" I snorts. "He was scared stiff—he thought somebody was *wise*. The rat!"

"Say, what are you gettin' at?" says the Kid, interested at last.

"This," I says. "Marty McCabe wasn't killed by hittin' his bean on nothin'. *He was dead when he started to fall!*"

The Kid's face is a movie. "I suppose," he says, with a sarcastical smile—"I suppose that Enright had a revolver concealed in his right glove and shot him—that it?"

"No," I says, "Enright had a *rabbit punch* concealed in his *left* glove and cracked his neck!"

That removed the sarcastical smile.

"Now," I continues, watchin' the amused sparkle in this big, handsome kid's gray eyes turn to a murderous steel glint, "if you'll gimme your undivided attention, I'll tell you what come to pass in that ring to-night. In the first place, let us take the rabbit punch. You've seen 'em kill rabbits by holdin' the intelligent animal up by the ears with one hand and hittin' him sharply on the back with the edge of the other, result—one dead rabbit. Now, it ain't a million years ago since this was a perfectly legal way of endin' a box fight, but the rabbit punch has been barred by law in most places and by public opinion in all. Next we have that clinch to-night which ends with the decease of Marty McCabe. Enright, a wild swinger, throws

that right uppercut into the air without a idea in the wide, wide world where it's goin' to land. Of course, he has hopes. As it happened, it caught McCabe on the chin and dazed him, but Enright, with his head buried under this guy's arm, didn't know where it went. All he knows is that he's licked if he don't get away from the terrific body punishment he was gettin', so he flicks up his left and drops *the edge of it* sharply on McCabe's neck. That's what finished McCabe—the rabbit punch, Kid, not the right uppercut! You and the newspaper guys is watchin' the fight. Me, I'm watchin' Enright, because you're goin' to fight him and I want to see everything he's got. And that's why we don't box that murderin' yellah dog."

We was at the hotel by this time, but the Kid don't make a crack till we get up to our rooms—just keeps shakin' his head.

"My God," he says to me fin'ly, "when I get out of this game I'll be the happiest man in the world!"

"I'll be the unhappiest," I says, "because I will then have to drive a truck!"

He throws over my shoulder a arm which in three years has turned him in close to a quarter of a million. "You'll quit the ring when I do," he grins, "and come in as an equal partner with father and me in whatever we undertake."

"I'd make a wonderful pillar of Wall Street," I says. "Nope, Kid, your intentions is great, but your judgment is terrible! When you step down I'll get me a battler or two and continue on."

"When I step down," he repeats. "That brings us back to Enright. We have a fifty-thousand-dollar for-

feit up to meet the winner of the Enright-McCabe fight, and Enright won—don't forget that."

"That's out, now," I says. "Enright will be on his way up the river in another month and—"

"Look here," he butts in. "I've thought this all over. How can you prove that he deliberately killed McCabe? Apparently nobody saw that rabbit punch but yourself."

That was it—how could I prove it?

"Listen to me," says the Kid after a minute. "There's nothing we can do about this but to keep quiet. We'll go down to-morrow and sign articles with Enright. They say I'm a moving-picture champion, eh? Well, you get me Enright, and I'll make him wish he'd never laid eyes on a boxing glove!"

"Hey, look here," I says, pretendin' to frown. "D'ye know you're gettin' terrible tough lately? I never heard *you* do no ballyhooin' about yourself before. What's the idea?"

Instantly he's embarrassed as a chorus girl without a telephone.

"Forgive me, old man," he says. "I can imagine how that must sound. I'll need two years in a finishing school after I quit this game before I'll dare attempt a drawing room!" Then he grins: "Say—it would be rich if Enright knocked *me* out, wouldn't it?"

You see what a kid he was.

Well, of course they didn't hold Enright for McCabe's death. Unavoidable accident and the like, and columns was wrote showin' they is eighty-six times

as many guys killed playin' football each year as they is in the box-fight game. What that proves I don't know. Anyways, in a week we sign to fight twenty frames with Enright for the world's heavyweight championship, and when we're comin' down in the elevator from the newspaper office, Red Samuels, Enright's pilot, says to me: "That was a tough break we got with McCabe—him dyin', eh?"

"Terrible tough," I says. "And if that bum of yours tries to rabbit-punch the champion, you'll get a tougher one. They'll all be watchin' him *this* time!"

He gets as white as cream, and I whispers somethin' to a newspaper guy. As I'm leavin' the elevator, the sport writer turns to Enright and says: "What's this I hear about you not enterin' a ring without a rabbit for a mascot?"

Sweet Mamma—you should of seen Enright's face!

They is nothin' like givin' the other guy somethin' to worry about. It all helps.

We are due to go in trainin' for Enright within a few weeks, and durin' that time the Kid got no peace from his father and the beautiful Dolores Brewster. Both of 'em seemed to have the idea that Kid Roberts was goin' to his grave if he climbed into a ring with the man-killin' Enright, and they begged him to call it a day and retire a undefeated and still livin' champion. The newspapers helped their arguments a whole lot. They was daily pictures of Enright, now the "sensational young challenger for the world's heavyweight championship." Kid Roberts would be lucky to go three rounds with this baby. He'd been away

from the ring too long, and bein' in the movies had softened him up. Anybody which could get past the first couple of rounds with him would take him. They never come back, etc.

All this stuff might of got my goat, only I had seen every word of it printed before about the guy Kid Roberts had took the title away from. You've seen it too. It never changes. The only difference is in the names.

The night before we're leavin' town for the long trainin' grind, we have a farewell dinner at Senator Brewster's home on Fifth Avenue. The Sen's igloo would make Buckin'ham Palace look like a stable. The Kid's father is there, lookin' like the king of the world with his fine big handsome head of steel-gray hair and class engraved on him from toe to forehead. Here's a guy which used to make 'em sit up and beg on Ticker Boulevard, and now he's just dubbin' along here and there—and waitin'. Across the long table is Kid Roberts and Dolores Brewster—the collar-ad guy come to life and talkin' to the magazine-cover girl! Every time I look at Dolores the room begins to wiggle and wobble, so I gaze down at my ballroom armor and wonder how in the Hades I ever come to be sittin' in with a swell mob like this.

"It isn't often I try to advise you, Kane," says old man Halliday, "but I do wish you would drop this—eh— this boxing business now. You've done about all you set out to do, and to say that we're all proud of you, boy, is rather weakly expressing it. It isn't necessary for you to continue longer in this beastly—"

"Yes, Kane, do give it up now!" chimes in Dolores, presentin' the Kid with a glance for which I would of give up a leg. "Please don't fight this—oh, this terrible brute who killed a man! I—"

The Kid grins and holds up his hand. "Just a moment, both of you," he says. "I am to receive three hundred thousand dollars—pardon the vulgar mention of money, but in my case it is obviously the incentive—for engaging in two bouts, the first of which is with this Enright fellow. I am taking no more risk—perhaps less—with him than I have in the other bouts I've engaged in. The three hundred thousand means a fair start back for father and"—he smiles at Dolores—"and at least that *you* may have a maid, a modest shopping account, a—"

"Look here, son," interrupts old man Halliday, "I appreciate the force of your argument, but I do not want my son killed to make a—well, to make a Roman *Halliday,* one might say!"

"Good heavens, dad, what an atrocious pun!" says the Kid. "Consider your case lost!"

"You *know* it will not make any difference to *me* whether or not we have—I mean, *I* have servants or a shopping account, or—or anything," says Dolores, whose old man has six dollars for every salmon in the Columbia River, "I'd love to make my own gowns and cook and—and everything!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" remarks her father, old Senator Brewster. "And yet they say prohibition has removed all the humor from dinner parties!"

Old man Halliday tries his luck again.

"At least, Kane," he says—"at least you might hold

off for a bit—postpone this bout with Enright. If the break comes in Mexicali Oil—you recall that stock I spoke to you about the other day?—if, as I say, the break comes, we may not need your three hundred thousand so imperatively."

"Dad," says the Kid, still grinnin', "just how much money have you put in Mexicali Oil?"

"About every penny I possess," says the old man, calmly knockin' the ash off his cigar.

The Kid throws up both hands and makes a face. "You're incurable, dad," he says, pretendin' to be sore—and then he turns and laughs to the others. "Now do you see how necessary it is for me to earn that three hundred thousand? Dad will have us both broke again in a couple of days!" We've all got up from the table by this time and the Kid throws his arm affectionately around his father's shoulders. "Father," he says with a wink, "I'm going to invest my end of the purse for this fight in a stock that in the matter of returns will make your wildest plunges of the old days seem tame. I expect at least three to one for my original investment!"

"What is the stock called?" asks the old man. "I'll look it—"

"You won't find this listed anywhere!" the Kid shuts him off. "Now, dad, don't ask questions. Wall Street is your game, mine is boxing—temporarily at least. You stick to your operations and I'll stick to mine, and after I've fought Enright we'll see who's ahead!"

The old man nods. "Very well, Kane," he says, "I won't interfere again."

But he did.

Well, all this stock business and the like was Russian to me, and I was glad when Senator Brewster made the crack that all us strong men go into the library for coffee and a smoke, leavin' the Kid and Dolores to play tiddledywinks or the etc., as the Kid was blowin' for his trainin' quarters the next day and they might not get a chance for another game for some time. As the hour come to leave, I am greatly surprised to see that the lovely Dolores's face shows signs of the weeps as she comes to the door with me and Kid Roberts, sendin' the butler away. She's still pleadin' with the Kid to pass up Enright.

"Now, dear, you must stop worrying," says the Kid, pattin' a ivory and satin shoulder. "I never felt more confident of victory in my life than I do regarding this bout! You've heard your father and mine talk until you have the idea that this Enright is some sort of superbrute—a human gorilla who will tear me to pieces. Nonsense! I'll tell you something, Dolores, to set your fears at rest. I meant to keep this as a surprise, and I don't want you to tell father or the Senator. I'm so sure that I will defeat Enright without extending myself *that I am going to wager every penny of my end of the purse*—$150,000 —*that I will win inside of six rounds!* I expect to get odds of three or four to one. That's the investment I had in mind when I told father I was plunging in a stock that would make his Mexicali Oil seem tame. Would I do that—risk everything—if I had the slightest doubt as to the outcome?"

I'm sorry, boys and girls, but I can't tell you what Dolores said, because I nearly broke my neck staggerin'

down the steps in a swoon! Bettin' on the *round* with a tough nut like Enright, hey? Woof!

The minute old man Halliday has said good night. After we get to the hotel, I dragged the Kid in my room and shut the door.

"I ain't no keyhole hound," I says, "but bein' on the steps up at the house like I was just now, I heard you tell Miss Brewster you was goin' to bet your end of the Enright purse that you'll stop this guy in six rounds."

"Well, keep it quiet," he says after lookin' at me for a minute. "I don't want my father to know anything about it—yet."

"You don't want—you don't mean to tell me you actually intend *makin'* a sucker bet like that, do you?" I gasps.

"I was never more in earnest!" he says, bangin' his fist down on the bureau. "The minute you collect our money, three days or whatever it is before the fight, you get it down—you'll know where—on me to win by a knockout inside of six rounds. I want every cent of it covered when I step into the ring!"

"A hundred and fifty grands!" I breathed. "You're cuckoo!"

"Not at all," he says impatiently. "Good Lord, I never was surrounded by so many crape hangers in my life! After this fight I expect to have something like half a million dollars, for I'll stop Enright in a couple of rounds as sure as my name is Halliday! Or maybe," he adds, suddenly turnin' a hard stare on me—"maybe *you* think I won't?"

"Look here," I says. "You'll win on the bit, but, Kid, don't try to call the round on this guy; don't do it! For one thing, he'll be in there to stay, and they's nothin' in the world harder to stop than a tough tramp which won't try—won't open up, but just dogs it to keep on his feet for a certain number of frames. He'll curl up in a knot and you'll break your hands on his head—you'll never see his jaw from the first bell! If you got to bet at all, bet ten grands—ten thousand bucks, that's—"

"I'll bet it all—minus yours if you want your share taken out first!" he interrupts coldly. "Your confidence in me is certainly encouraging. Just figure how much you have coming, and—"

"Oh, shoot the piece as far as I'm concerned," I says. "You know I'm with you whether school keeps or not. But, look here, we both know you'll murder this goof, but suppose you can't knock him stiff for *seven* rounds, even—why, you're broke, ain't you? Ain't you slipped your old man the rest of your roll?"

"Yes," he says. "I have at this minute about five thousand dollars. The rest I've given father, and he has it tied up in that oil stock—which means that's gone! It's all or nothing this time. I'll show them whether or not I'm through as a fighter—I'll step out of that ring still champion and worth half a million, or just a heavyweight boxer without a penny, one or the other. Eh—good night!"

With that he slams out of the room.

The next afternoon we have two callers before train time. One is Jimmy McManus, the promoter. After

hemmin' and hawin' all over the place, he comes out flat with a offer of a $25,000 bonus for us if we let Enright stay fifteen rounds so's the movin pictures of the muss will be worth somethin'. The newspaper guff about the Kid bein' through hadn't fooled Jimmy. Kid Roberts escorts James to the door politely and tells him to give his twenty-five thousand fish to the Red Cross, because he is goin' to do his best to stop Enright with a punch, and to Hades with the pictures.

The second caller made James McManus and his $25,000 bribe look like a piker. It was no less than Senator Brewster himself. The Kid apologizes for goin' right on with his packin', explainin' that we got but a scant forty minutes to catch a train. The Sen clears his throat a couple of times, gives me a four-dollar cigar, and says maybe we ain't goin' to catch a train.

"I'm afraid I don't understand, Senator," says the Kid, lookin' up quickly from his suit case. "There's nothing wrong, is there? Dolores—"

"Nothing wrong, no," grunts the Senator, puffin' smoke heavy. "Look here, Kane—according to your own statement, the only reason you're going through with this Enright fight, and the one after that, is because of the $300,000 involved so that you can quit the ring with a competence, that right?"

"Exactly!" says the Kid, slammin' shut the suit case.

"Well, Kane," says the Senator. "Eh—I've had a conference with Dolores, and as you probably know she's all cut up over this thing of you going on fighting —eh—especially this Enright bout. You know, my

boy, all champions must go down to defeat sooner or—"

"Mr. Brewster—please—we've gone all into that, and my train—" The Kid breaks off, frownin'.

"Oh, damn the train!" bursts out the Sen. "See here, Kane, step out now—retire from the ring as you are, an undefeated champion, cancel this Enright bout and—*and I'll make you and Dolores a wedding present of* $300,000, the exact amount you—"

Somethin' in the Kid's face must of stopped him because he broke off short. The Kid's eyebrows has come together in a hard, straight line, but in a instant he's grinnin'.

"Senator," he says, "I know you wouldn't deliberately insult me for anything in the world. Eh—I can see you're a trifle wrought up and—oh, get thee behind me, Satan!" he winds up, gives the Sen's hand a warm shake, grabs his suit case and rushes for the door. "Come on!" he calls to me (I'm in a trance). "Good-by, Senator, and good luck—back in a month!"

Passin' up a total of $325,000 in less than a hour without turnin' a hair! Deliberately passin' it up and takin' a chance of gettin' his head beat off—for *nothin'* if he loses his bet, instead.

Woof—tie these college guys!

Accordin' to our contracts, both us and Enright has got to wind up trainin' near the scene of the battle. Me and Kid Roberts come down from the Maine woods and took our stand at Long Branch, N. J., where we'd trained for many's the brawl. The next day the sport writers and camera guys swoops down on us in droves, fresh from Enright's camp. They

stuck around and watched the Kid work out with Dynamite Jackson and a couple other handlers, shook their heads, breezed back to New York, and predicted a new heavyweight champion when Kid Roberts and Jack Enright went to the post. The Kid was slow, fat, and wind-broke. Enright, in wonderful condition, was murderin' his sparrin' partners, etc., and so forth.

I don't know nothin' about how Enright was. I never visit no rival camps before a fight, but I *do* know that Kid Roberts was far from the young man which win the world's heavyweight championship in three rounds, just one year before! For the first time since I'd been his pilot I couldn't do nothin' with him. He went to bed and got up when he felt like it, eat what he wanted, clowned his gym workouts, and did his road work in a automobile. To all of my threats and pleadin's he answered that he wasn't goin' through no weary trainin' grind for a scrap which wouldn't last over a couple of rounds.

About a week before the quarrel I suddenly got word from no less than Dolores Brewster that she's got to see me at once on a matter of life and death connected with the fight. Also, I am not to let the Kid know about her message.

The most beautiful representative of the adjoinin' sex that I, you, or anybody else ever seen is much excited. The first thing she wants to know is whether or not the Kid is still goin' to bet his end of the purse that he'll flatten Enright in six rounds. "When does he get this money?" she wants to know.

"I collect it," I says, "three days before we step into the ring.

"Splendid," says Dolores, lookin' greatly relieved about somethin'. Then she puts everything she's got on a smile, curls a wicked eyelash at me, pulls her chair closer, and whispers: "Will you do something for me if it—if it means the happiness of Kane and myself?"

"Lady," I says, a bit dizzy, "I will *start* by pushin' over the Woolworth Buildin', if that will be of any help!"

"You can do more than that, if you will," she says, thrillin'ly and throws the smile into high. "Listen!"

I listened. I listened for half a hour, argued for twenty minutes of the other half, and spent the last ten minutes of that hour half promisin' to do the slight favor she asked, knowin' full well that the best I could hope to get out of it was the worst of it.

Dolores had doped out that if Kid Roberts failed to stop Enright within six rounds he would lose his hundred-and-fifty-thousand-dollar bet and be broke. If he went broke, he would be forced to keep on fightin' for another bank roll instead of quittin' the ring and settlin' down with her as advertised. Therefore she wanted me to bring *her* our end of the purse instead of bettin' it for the Kid when I collected it. If the Kid stopped Enright in a round or two and then looked to me for his winnin's, Dolores would take all the responsibility and blame, figurin' that the Kid loved her enough for her to get away with murder—which he undoubtedly did. If, on the other hand, the Kid failed to knock Enright dead in the stipulated time, why, he'd still have his $150,000, which would certainly be a pleasant surprise.

I says I would think it over, and that's what I did, with the results that a couple of days afterward I called upon the charmin' Dolores with a mysterious-lookin' and bulgin' little black satchel in my hand, like the kind usually wore by bank messengers. I laid it on the table in front of her without a word and, hearin' footsteps approachin' the room, Dolores shoves the bag into a little wall safe, swiftly spins the combination, and writes me a receipt for $150,000. That windin' up the business of the meetin', I took the air.

At the risk of losin' my lady readers, I have got to say that they was nothin' in that satchel I give Dolores but newspapers. I had figured the thing about like this—if I failed to bet the $150,000 and the Kid *did* stop Enright in six rounds, he would look to me to hand him back his winnin's at three to one or better. Then would come the heavy crash! And whilst he'd prob'ly forgive Dolores, he would never under no circumstances forgive *me*. On the other hand, if I bet it and he lost, we'd still be friends because I'd only be carryin' out his orders. On top of all this, they was always the chance that Kid Roberts *would* stop Enright in a round and by not bettin' his dough for him I'd be gippin' out of a fortune the whitest guy which ever lived.

To absolutely refuse to give Dolores the jack might bring her to the camp to upset the Kid on the eve of the fight, so I played safe and took the hundred and fifty thousand fish down to Wall Street—the best place to handle a bet of that size on anything.

I stopped in old man Halliday's office to leave the dough with him whilst I scouted around for the sportin' men.

"Well," he says, suddenly, "perhaps I may be of service. There appears to be a great deal of interest in the fight down here—I've heard talk of large wagers in several offices. Maybe *I* could place the money with less difficulty than yourself and—"

"Say—that would be great!" I butts in. "If you'll take the thing off my hands, I'll be tickled silly. Besides, it'll *look* better—you layin' the jack instead of me. If *I* go around bettin' any such money as this that the fight won't go six rounds, the wisenheimers is liable to think the thing's framed."

He nods and, puttin' the sugar into his safe, wrote me a receipt for it. I sure had plenty of receipts that day for $150,000!

When I got back to the camp, the Kid is stretched out on a sofa readin' a newspaper. The first thing he says is did I get his money down. I says I have gave it to a Wall Street bettin' commissioner to place the way he told me, and he says that's fine. Then he calls me over and shows me the paper.

"As I expected," he says grimly, "the bottom has fallen out of Mexicali Oil—remember, that's the stock my father has all his capital in?—so he's whipped again! Poor dad," he goes on pityin'ly, "he's too old now to match his wits against those wolves. The steel-trap brain is rusted! I wish I had made him sell out and bet his money with mine." He jumps up. "Well," he laughs, "we'll have plenty of money after this fight! But I'm sorry for dad. This thing must have been an

awful shock to his pride." He nods to the paper. "Poor old pater—they never come back!"

Well, fin'ly the night comes when we shoulder our ways down a aisle of close-packed, yellin', fight-mad fans and climb through the ropes opposite Monsieur Jack Enright (which the sport writers has now christened "Killer" Enright). We continued right on over to his corner and examined his bandages, and Enright kept his eyes on the floor, scowlin' and very serious.

"Cheer up, it's all fun!" I says to him, after his goat. The sport writers laughed, and the telegraph instruments ticked *that* down into history.

"We come here to fight—not talk!" snarls Enright's manager.

"You'll get what you come for, guy!" I says. "And I have also told the sport writers all about that rabbit punch of yours, Enright, so watch your step for the few minutes you'll be in here!"

And then we left him.

They was little time wasted in fussin' around. The champ got a fair hand when he was introduced—when it come Enright's turn they rocked the buildin' with cheers. The men posed for a couple of flashlights, and then—the bell.

The first round wasn't a minute old before the thickest dumb-bell in the abattoir knew that Kid Roberts had gone back eighty-seven miles and that Enright had the chance of his lifetime if he kept his head. The crowd was with the "Killer" almost to a man; they wanted to see a new champion made. They booed

and razzed every miss of the Kid's and cheered themselves hoarse at Enright's every lead. They shrieked and howled for Enright to muss the Kid up, murder him, knock him dead, goal the big stiff!

Now, all of this was new to the highly sensitive and proud-spirited Kid Roberts. It got under his skin, murdered his usual cool judgment and perfect timin'. He was carryin' at least twelve pounds excess baggage around his waist line, he was slow, and his anxiety to finish Enright swiftly and cop the heavy bet, added to the hostile attitude of the mob, made him careless and wild. The results of all this was that Enright took the first three rounds by a wide margin, usin' a wicked right hook to the face and poundin' the body with both hands at close quarters with deadly effect.

The Kid rushed out to end matters in the fourth round and unluckily run into a right smash to the head that drove him against the ropes, goofy. The mob went crazy, yellin' for Enright to finish him and, still dazed, the Kid begin tradin' wallops with one of the hardest hitters that ever stepped into a ring. It was easy to see that Enright carried the heaviest guns; and after he drove two murderous smashes to the heart, I yelled for the Kid to clinch and hang on till the bell. But Kid Roberts was champion, and with the idiotical pride that's licked many's the champ before him, he shook his head and stood toe to toe with Enright, givin' swing for swing and hook for hook. Again I bellered for the Kid to *box* Enright, which knew nothin', and not to *slug* with him, and this time he took my advice as his head grew clearer. He began stabbin' Enright's

face with his long, snappy left and crossin' his right to the head. Enright had enough of this inside a minute, and was hangin' on at the bell, lookin' wildly to his corner for advice. Nevertheless, the crowd cheered him to the echo when he floundered to his corner and booed the Kid as heartily when he sunk down wearily on his stool.

Four rounds and Enright still on his feet and a hundred and fifty thousand berries gone if he stays two more!

Round Five was tame compared to the others. Actin' on my advice, Kid Roberts saved his strength for the final effort in the sixth round and made no attempt to carry the battle to Enright. Payin' no attention to the frantic howls of the mob to open up and take a chance, the champ danced lightly around the clumsy Enright, pepperin' him with left jabs and occasionally sinkin' a torrid right to the wind, clinchin' when the goin' got rough. They was wrapped in a fond embrace on the ropes at the bell.

The sixth round was one that will be recalled by anybody which was there when they have forgot their first names! The sound of the gong hadn't quite died out when the Kid was on Enright like a famished tiger. He ripped a left and right to the face, drawin' the blood in a stream and, as Enright vainly tried to dive into a clinch, the champ switched his attack to the body and soon had Enright's side a large blotch of crimson. Enright begin swingin' wildly, when a left hook caught him square on the button and he fell in a heap. He was so badly dazed he never waited for no count but come springin' up mechanically, both arms

curled protectin'ly around his jaw. It would of been a easy matter for the Kid to step aside and measure him, but he lost his head and wasted a dozen haymakers on Enright's neck and shoulders.

The crowd was now all composed of lunatics, and I died a million deaths as the seconds slipped by with Enright still on his feet and the entire bank roll dependin' on a knockout in this round.

Enright, seemin'ly gettin' stronger on punishment, followed the advice from his corner and stepped into the Kid, workin' both hands fast. Again the Kid dropped him, with a glancin' right this time, and again Enright bounced up, after a count of four. Tough? They didn't make 'em any tougher than this baby! Both landed hard rights to the head and then the Kid was short with a left to the jaw. Enright put a wicked right to the body and brought a fresh roar from the crowd when he doubled the Kid up with a left smash to the same place. I had a watch in my hand and I yelled to the Kid that they's less than a minute to go and to knock Enright dead or we're broke. He shook himself desperately and slammed Enright all over the ring, but this guy curls up, bends almost to the floor, leaves nothin' uncovered and takes it. His idea now was to weather the storm and stick out the round—nothin' more. Crazy with the thoughts of what he was losin', the Kid deliberately stepped away, droppin' his hands to lead Enright on. Enright's head peeped over his bent arm and like a flash the Kid shot a terrific right to the jaw, droppin' him like a poled ox. And the very instant that big tramp hit the floor for a sure knockout, *the bell rung, endin' the sixth round*

and endin' Kid Roberts's hundred and fifty thousand bucks! The gong had saved Enright—he'd stayed the six rounds.

Well, it was a funeral in our corner as the Kid slowly slumped down on his stool and bent his battered head in his hands. They was nothin' for *me* to say—nothin' to do but pat the Kid on his quiverin' back and whisper to him like you do to a baby or your girl, as the handlers frantically worked over him. After all his struggles to pile up a roll, he ain't got a nickel. Havin' bet and lost his end of the purse, he's fightin' Enright *for nothin'* from now on. His old man has evidently been cleaned out by the bust and Dolores Brewster is now out of reach till he can climb back again.

"Listen, Kid!" I pants in his ear. "Stall it out with this guy till the fifteenth anyways, and maybe I can bull McManus into thinkin' we deliberately let Enright stay for the pictures—see? Maybe I can make him give us that twenty-five grand bonus he offered, and we'll have *that* anyways! Hang on to him till you're stronger and—"

The Kid looks up for the first time, like a guy just comin' out of ether. His glassy eyes swings around on the mob which is still poundin' their seats and howlin' for Enright to knock him dead.

"I'm not thinking how long I can *stay,*" he says in a husky snarl, "I'm thinking how quick I can *win!* I was a fool and, like all fools, I've paid the price—lost everything—may lose my championship too. Stay fifteen rounds? I can't go *two* more rounds! I've punched myself out on this fellow—no condition—should have trained—knew it all—" His head swings up, and he

glares over at Enright's corner with his one good eye. "Mister Enright," he mutters, "you represent Fate! I've knocked you down a couple of times and you're still there—grinning at me. Well, here goes for my last try against you—there will only be *one* of us when the bell rings for the end of this—"

The gong cut him off.

Sensin' the end, the mob is standin' on their seats when the men come together. Enright missed a left swing, but connected with a right that bent the Kid's already tremblin' knees and laid his cheek open a good four inches—the ensuin' gore makin' it look much worse. This would of wound it up for a guy with less heart than the Kid, but it acted on the champ like a tonic. He was hurt, busted, and, for the first time durin' the muss—*mad*. Before, he'd only been anxious to end it quick to win his bet, now he wanted Enright's heart! He knew he only had one flurry, one flash left in his tired, achin' body, and he sailed in to kill or get killed. He rushed Enright to the ropes and, pinnin' him there, drove a smashin' left to the wind with a "plunk" that was heard in the last row.

A minute before the mob had been callin' the Kid a bum, now they are with him to a man because he's out in front. Such is life in the prize ring and—anything else! On the break, Enright swung a wild haymaker that landed high on the Kid's head, but that was the Killer's last effort. As he rushed in, both hands swingin' wildly, the Kid stepped to one side and hooked his right flush to the jaw, tumblin' Enright to the canvas. Enright's handlers yelled for him to stay down, but he shook his head and staggered to his feet. The

fast weakenin' Kid measured him with a left and then crashed him to the mat with another right hook. Enright never moved a muscle whilst he was counted out, the Kid standin' over him lookin' at the hysterical crowd, which is now tellin' each other at the top of their voices that he's the greatest champion that ever lived.

We are still world's heavyweight champion—but we ain't got a nickel!

Dolores and Senator Brewster is at the hotel when we get back, and when I seen her with the satchel I had give her in her hand I turned pale. The Kid shakes the Senator's hand, kisses Dolores, apologizes for his battered appearance, like that was of any importance, and then he begins to tell her he ain't got a dime in the world.

"Yes, you have, Kane dear," butts in Dolores, her eyes shinin'. *"I* saved it for you—your hundred and fifty thousand is right here!" And she puts the satchel on a table.

Woof! Can you imagine *my* sensations right then? I am wonderin' which window I'll leap out of when Dolores opens that bag and sees nothin' but newspapers. The Kid looks kind of bewildered as Dolores begins strugglin' with the catch on the satchel.

"Just a minute, Miss Brewster," I says in a kind of muffled voice, steppin' forward. "Don't open that bag—it—eh—they ain't a nickel in it!"

And then, whilst the Kid looked from Dolores to me, his suddenly hardened features gradually softenin' and her usually soft eyes gradually hardenin', I told

'em how I had fooled Dolores and bet the Kid's money like he told me. How I'd met his old man in his office by chance and gave him the entire roll to bet that the Kid would stop Enright in six rounds. I wave old man Halliday's receipt for the jack at the busted Kid.

Nobody said nothin' for a minute—the toughest sixty seconds I ever spent in my life! Then Dolores spoke, her eyes scorchin' me. "Oh!" she kind of flung at me. "And I trusted you!"

Never in her life will that girl believe I'm not crooked!

"No!" says the Kid suddenly, throwin' an arm around me. "You must not misjudge him, Dolores, you must not be angry. I'd stake my life on this man's honesty—frequently have—and he did right! He followed my instructions to the letter—"

A knock on the door interrupted him, and old man Halliday walks in, grabs the Kid and they hug each other. "Still champion!" says the old man, his chest out a extry foot.

"Still champion, dad!" smiles the Kid. "But we're back about four years. I'm penniless, as you probably know. Of course, you placed the money?"

"Yes," says the old man, "I placed it—*I placed it in Mexicali Oil* and, as for being penniless—" He laughs, kinda hysterically. "You're rather hard to please, Kane. I should say, roughly, that at this minute *you're worth half a million!*"

"Holy mackerel!" I yells and fell into a chair. This stuff is tough on the heart! The rest seemed speechless.

"But—but—" stammers the whitefaced Kid, "the bottom fell out of Mexicali Oil—I saw it in the newspapers—"

"Some days ago, of course," beams the old man. "I—ah—we attended to that, and that's when I bought—with your heaven-sent hundred and fifty thousand! The money was brought to me to wager for you and, taking your advice, I stuck to my own game. The long-promised gusher was brought in this morning and when I ceased operations this afternoon I held certified checks to the tune of some four hundred and eighty thousand dollars and—well, have you seen this?"

He hauls a extry from his pocket, and on the front page in large type it says:

J. A. HALLIDAY COMES BACK!
Ex-Wizard of Wall Street
Wins Fortune in Oil.
Wild Scenes on Curb!

In a adjoining column is:

ROBERTS STOPS ENRIGHT IN SEVENTH.

"Well," says the Kid, kinda dazed, "all this is too much for *me*—I'm—I'm bewildered!" He grabs his father's hands and his eyes is very damp. "Dad," he says, "I—you make me feel—eh—futile! The old master, eh?" He straightens up and looks from one to the other of us. "You must excuse me," he apologizes, "I'm a bit used up. I've just come through

the hardest battle of my career, and I took a lot of punishment—but—I'm still champion!"

The old man nods and picks up the paper, gazin' at the glarin' headlines.

"Now *that,*" he says, with the grin of a kid, "that is exactly the way *I* feel!"

The bell.

ROUND TWELVE

JOAN OF NEWARK

THE idea that he was invincible took Napoleon from the island of Corsica to the throne of the world. The same belief took him from the throne of the world to the island of St. Helena.

As soon as the average guy gets to be champion of *anything,* whether it's pitchin' quoits or runnin' empires, his regard for himself reaches a point that's hard for the rest of us to understand. When he was battle-axin' his way up, the attempts of the other bird to beat him made him sore and in settin' out to take this one baby he incidentally shoved himself ahead of the entire field. But once he arrives at the top and some other guy announces he's out to shove him off, your champ don't get mad, he just laughs—laughs so hard he loses his balance and you don't have to shove him, he *tumbles* off!

Let us take the case of Kid Roberts, for the example.

After the Kid smashed Jack Enright down and out in seven rounds, Jimmie McManus was busier than a three-headed elephant in a peanut factory, scourin' the country for the second victim. Meanwhile, this Enright ducked up to Buffalo to gather what looked like some terrible soft jack. He made a overnight match

with Knockout Pierce, a guy which nobody but Pierce's father and mother had ever heard of up to then, and which looked like a push over.

This brawl cost Monsieur Jacques Enright exactly $40,000, which was what McManus was goin' to tip him for his second quarrel with Kid Roberts. Knockout Pierce ended the fight a minute and a half before the bell in the first round with a terrific right hook to the jaw. Enright was out so long that when he come to the first thing he asked was whether or not the draft law had passed Congress.

Well, of course, that was the curtain for Enright and the fortunate young Mr. Knockout Pierce become the boy wonder of fistiana. Always a cold-eyed gambler, Jimmy McManus hesitated, however, about signin' him to meet Kid Roberts. The punch that knocked Enright dead might of been a fluke and James didn't want to hire nobody which the Kid would stop with his first feint. Immediately the typewriters opened up on us from all over the ex-Land of the Spree. We was accused of pickin' boloneys and bein' scared stiff of Pierce which had flattened the tough Enright in less than a round, whereas the champion had required seven frames for the same job. Nine out every ten of them sport writers knew in their hearts that it was the beatin' Enright had got from the Kid which softened him up and made him a mark for Pierce. How the so ever, McManus quit to the newspapers and signed Knockout Pierce to meet Kid Roberts in a twenty-round mêlée for the heavyweight championship of the wide, wide world.

A lot of weeks was throwed away like they always is before a championship fight, in selectin' the time,

the place, and the referee for this quarrel. This wasn't our fault. Kid Roberts had about the same interest in who, where, and when he was goin' to box as I have in the price of putty at Budapest. Like all champions, he figured himself invincible. Understand, the boy didn't *brag* about it; Kid Roberts and conceit was as far apart as 6 and 6,000. He looked on himself as bein' unbeatable as calmly as he regarded the risin' sun—but also, with the same belief that it was a fact. From the time I bought his contract from Dummy Carney for a hundred fish when he was a nervous, green, preliminary boloney till the day he quit the ring, the Kid ducked nobody, drawed no color lines, or argued over weights, distance, or referees. He left everything to my judgment, and the tougher they come the better.

So, bein' around New York, and havin' no more interest in Knockout Pierce than he ever did in any of his comin' opponents, this delay in cinchin' the fight tickled the Kid silly.

For one thing, it give him some time to devote to Dolores Brewster—which would of caused Cleopatra to jump in the handiest lake—and for another thing, it give him a chance to do some campaignin' for her father, which at that time was runnin' for reëlection to the U. S. Senate. Dolores headed a committee of Janes, whilst the Kid had organized a bunch of his ex-playmates from sweet old Yale and went hithers and yon about the State makin' speeches for Senator Brewster. By a strange coincidence, as we remark on the campus, the Senator was a former New Haven cut-up himself.

Now I had no objections to Kid Roberts helpin' Senator Brewster to breeze home in front, because besides bein' a forty-six carat fight fan, as familiar a figure as the referee at all the big bouts, the Sen of course, was the Kid's comin' father-in-law and a all-around regular guy. But I *did* holler murder about the Kid neglectin' his trainin', stayin' up to all hours of the night campaignin' for the Senator, fillin' himself up with this fancy and fattenin' chow at these dinner parties Dolores was always givin', and chasin' back and forth to Long Island superintendin' the buildin' of the palace him and her was goin' to live happy ever after in. The long, tough years of the strict and monotonous trainin' grind, the early-to-bed and early-to-rise thing, duckin' the jazz and practically livin' like a monk, had all come to a end now accordin' to the Kid's way of thinkin'. He was enjoyin' himself with this political campaignin', seein' Dolores every day, and loungin' around in a dress suit after 6 p. m. where they was soft lights and music and good-lookin', blue-blooded Janes, instead of the reekin' din of a smoke filled fight club and the smell of blood and arnica. He didn't want to be bothered, and when Knockout Pierce come to New York to box Gunner Macy, Kid Roberts refused to go with me for the purpose of gettin' a line on Pierce's wares.

Well, *I* went—and I seen enough to keep me awake many's the night in the next few months! Knockout Pierce, a cold-eyed, snarlin', six-foot, 220-pound fightin' machine of bone and muscle, let Gunner Macy stay two rounds so's to give his first metropolitan audience somethin' to talk about. He presented the be-

wildered Macy with a sparrin' lesson, let the Gunner crack him to show the sharps he could take it, and flitted about the ring like a startled ghost till twice the Gunner fell on his ear from throwin' wallops at Pierce that missed by fractions of a inch. Why, this baby was clever enough to of boxed ten rounds under a needle shower and never get hit by a drop of water, and oh, how he could sock! A curvin' round-armed right swing twenty seconds after the start of the third round sent Gunner Macy to dreamland and the customers went home swearin' they'd see the Kid Roberts-Knockout Pierce quarrel if it was staged on Mars.

Well, at that, it would of been well worth the trip!

A week or so after this a big show is put on at a theatre in the land of Newark, N. J., for the benefit of Thirsty Timbuctoo, Starvin' Siberia, Hungry Hungary, or Sufferin' Sebastopol. I forget now which one of our League of Poor Relations was goin' to get this jack. Anyways the Kid dropped everything, as he always did to help any charity, and appeared on the bill in a exhibition with a sparrin' partner.

I was sittin' in his dressin' room waitin' for him to come off, when the guy which keeps the yokels away from the stage door comes in and hands me a card. It says like this:

Joan Stillwell
The Newark Evening Yell

A woman sport writer is a bit new, I thinks. Still and all, I have never been no ladies' man—in fact I

have ducked the adjoinin' sex all my life, thereby missin' a lot of fun and a equal amount of trouble. Whilst I am hesitatin', the doorkeeper butts in with the information that since he has been holdin' down his present portfolio he has seen more breath-takin' young women than Flo Ziegfeld ever did, but the girl which was waitin' to see Kid Roberts would of made Columbus forget what he sailed from Spain for. After hearin' this sensational piece of news, I figured it was no more than polite to see what the young lady wished.

I barely got time to smooth my hair when into the dressin' room steps what all the poets thinks Eve looked like, except, of course, she was dressed different. They is no more use of me attemptin' to describe Joan Stillwell than they is of me tryin' to cross the Pacific on a motorcycle. I may give you a faint idea of her when I say that, hard-boiled as I am, she looked as good to my startled eyes as Venus, $5,000 a week, a California sunset, all the peaches and cream in the world, the Prince of Wales's future, Rockefeller's bank roll, and Mary Pickford! A set of classy scenery in no ways concealed a—eh—figure which would of drove Helen from Troy to suicide, and I suppose when Joan reads this she'll laugh herself sick.

Anyways, boys and girls, by the time she had raised a pair of blue eyes which give me more kick than I ever got over a bar before the plague, I am as short of breath as I am of degrees from Oxford.

"Oh—pardon me, is Mister Roberts here?" she asks, gettin' a bit red under my dumfounded stare.

"He is for all *I* know." I says, with a goofy grin. "Look around—*I'm* dizzy!"

She gazes at me closely for a second, and then she smiles. She knew she had goaled me all right—she'd probably watched 'em swoon away like that since her fifteenth birthday. Still out on my feet, I got her a chair and asked her what she wished, prepared to see that she got it if it was Niagara Falls.

"Why, I wanted to interview the champion for the 'Evening Yell,'" she tells me. "I intend doing some articles on him from a woman's viewpoint for the sporting page. I—I won't keep him long—just so I can get a few interesting facts about his rise to the top of his profession and that sort of thing, you know. You are his manager, aren't you?"

I am still in a trance, but manage to say yes.

"Perhaps *you* can tell me a few things while I'm waiting for him, then," she says, tryin' not to giggle, I suppose. "For instance, is it really true that he is a Yale man?"

Well, I was gettin' kind of used to this dazzlin' beauty then, and I cut loose with well-oiled and free-swingin' tongue on my favorite subject, to the viz., Kid Roberts. Whilst Joan of Newark listened with glistenin' eyes, I told her all the stuff you know about, and she seemed to be eatin' it up, only interruptin' now and then to ask a question about a date or the like and mark it down in her notebook. She seemed to think it marvelous that the Kid was due to marry into the family of a U. S. Senator and that his father had made such a wonderful comeback, and she asked me a lot about that. Well, I aimed to satisfy the girl, and I was as full of details as a income-tax blank.

Whilst she's still cross-examinin' me, in comes no less than Kid Roberts himself. I was watchin' close, and I seen the deep breath he took before he gazed at me and then back to her with a sudden smile. Joan has stood up the minute he come in, and them sapphire eyes of hers showed that the Kid had registered heavy with our fair young visitor. Kid Roberts was a natural lady assassin, if they ever was one. Lookin' from one to the other of 'em give me the blues—not that I had my fears about the Kid forgettin' Dolores. It just happened to bring to my mind what a fat chance *I* had of ever grabbin' off for myself anyone like either Dolores or Joan, and right then and there I knew that nothin' less than a duplicate of 'em would do.

In talkin' about his future plans, the Kid tells Joan how tickled he'll be when he has fought Knockout Pierce and retired, as whilst he liked boxin', he hated the prize ring and its "sordid, bestial atmosphere!" as he called it.

"Oh, I'm *so* glad to hear *you* say that, Mister Halliday!" says Joan, callin' him by his real name like he asked her. "I wish my little brother could hear those sentiments coming from you, the world's champion boxer. You know"—she smiles cutely—"you're a god to him; his room is literally covered with your pictures from the sporting magazines!"

"He is a boxing enthusiast?" asks the Kid politely.

"He's a little imp!" laughs Joan. "But the best-hearted, cleanest, and manliest little fellow in the world," she adds proudly, lookin' from me to the Kid like she would love to see somebody try and deny it. "Jimmy has designs on the lightweight championship."

she explains. "He's a shipping clerk by day and "One-Round Stillwell,' or some such horrible person, by night at those awful clubs. Jimmy loves me, and ordinarily I can do anything with him—there's just the two of us, you know— but he is determined to be a prize fighter. Oh, I wish I could ask you—to—to—see him, Mister Halliday, and speak to him as you did to me," she winds up earnestly. "He's such a *young* boy and—"

"We'll both talk with him, Miss Stillwell," butts in the Kid, as she hesitates. "And I think I know of a perfectly harmless way of showing your brother what a little chump he is to throw away his best years in the prize ring. I'll be glad to help." He turns to me. "Find out where the boy is fighting, old man," he says, "and bring him over to see me. If arguments fail, I think he would be glad of a chance to make himself useful around the gym. We can even intimate to him that he's part of my—er—camp, and I think," he winds up, turnin' back to Joan, "I think that about a week of the hard and thankless work will cure him quicker than anything any of us might tell him. Want to try it?"

"I think you are perfectly splendid—thanks awfully!" says Joan, throwin' her smile into high. "You can find him at nights around the Aldine Athletic Club here. Most any of the men can point him out to you—in fact, he already has quite a swarm of admirers. And now I won't bother you any longer; good-bye and thanks, both of you, for everything!"

Gee, but that room looked empty after she'd went!

"Kid," I says to Roberts, still sniffin' the perfume she left in the air, "for a damsel like *that* I would cut off both arms with my face wreathed in smiles!"

"You'd find yourself at a disadvantage, then, if you won her," he grins, gettin' into his citizen's clothes. "She certainly appears to be a charming girl, and I wish you luck!"

"Wish *me* luck?" I sighs—ain't love tough, hey? "Why, I got the same identical chance of makin' Miss Stillwell as I have of bein' elected the next king of England by acclamation!"

"Look here," says the Kid, stoppin' in the midst of combin' his hair and comin' over to lay his hands on my shoulders. "Don't ever let me hear you talk in that strain again! I've known you now for almost four years—we've been together, fair weather and foul. My success has rested more than once upon your honesty, judgment, and courage. You assume a hard-boiled cynicism, but you're a darn big fraud, old fellow, and the finer things of life have as strong an appeal to you as they do to the 'drawing-room set' that you pretend to ridicule. You're a he-man, with the heart of, no doubt, your mother, and if you had a single fundamental weakness of character you never could have hidden it from me, during what we've been through since I got into this infernal game! I know you better than you do yourself—far better—and if you were my brother I'm sure I'd boast of the relationship. So don't patronize yourself old boy; you're as good as the next one and better than most. If Joan Stillwell is to be *the* one, she is a very fortunate young woman!"

Even though I knew they was none of the above true,

I found more difficulty with my Adam's apple for the space of a second than I have had in years. Likewise, I seemed to have got somethin' in my eyes.

"Kid," I says, fin'ly, "I—I—you big stiff!"

And grabbin' one of his shoes from the floor, I heaved it at him for the purposes of changin' the subject and—eh—gettin' control. . . .

Well, a couple of days after, me and the Kid is sittin' in the rooms at the hotel, when the desk phones up to find out will we see some reporters. As counterfeiters, yeggs, murderers, and the like is about the only human bein's in this wide, wide world which is tellin' the truth when they claim they don't like publicity, I says to send the boys right up. When I opened the door to let 'em in a few minutes later, I couldn't blame the Kid for givin' vent to a gasp of surprise. It looked more like we was going to be raided instead of interviewed! They was about fifteen young men filed into the room, and although I knew all the sport writers of the New York papers, these babies was strangers to *me*. A tall thin one coughs and says to me:

"Eh—I'm with the 'Post'—eh—did you give an interview to the Newark 'Evening Yell' the other day?"

"Sure!" I grins. "I told the story of the Kid's life to a young lady by the name of Miss Stillwell, which wanted the same for the sportin' page."

"For the *sporting page,* eh?" says the reporter, lookin' around at the other guys, some of which laughs out loud. "Clever girl!" he goes on, facin' me again. "She's losing time in Newark—that's a cinch!"

The Kid frowns, and I took a step toward this guy.

"Mister Roberts—eh—pardon *me,* Mister *Halliday*

—" says the reporter, "how long has Senator Brewster been a business partner of your father's, and is it true that the senator—eh—bought your father's seat on the Stock Exchange?"

Wow!

"What the devil are you talking about?" busts out the Kid, his face gettin' red. "You had better put your questions in less offensive language, young man, or—I say, what's the idea of all this, anyhow?"

The reporter grins and takes a folded newspaper from his pocket and hands it to the Kid. "Of course," he says smoothly, "you know that the Newark 'Evening Yell' is a party organ in this neck of the woods, and, naturally, your—eh—this rather amazing disclosure regarding Senator Brewster that you made to a member of its staff was a wonderful political weapon for them."

But the Kid, glancin' nervously over the newspaper, has suddenly let out a muttered, gaspin' cuss, and spread the paper out so's I could see it. Right smack on page 1 is a headline as big as Chicago:

SAYS BREWSTER BACKS WALL STREET WIZARD

Evening Yell Gets Exclusive Story of New York Senator's Connection with J. A. Halliday.

Speculator's Son, "Kid Roberts," Heavyweight Champion, Admits Facts—To Wed Senator's Daughter!

Well I just flopped in a chair and watched the room go round and round. So Joan had doubled-crossed us!

She'd pumped me dry—took everything I told her and twisted it around till it meant a darn sight more than was actually true. And here this other reporter had just tricked me into admittin' this was all *facts!* Can you picture what that article was goin' to do to the old senator, practically on the eve of election? I knew then how Samson felt when Delilah give him that haircut!

"I have nothing to say regarding this article," the Kid is tellin' the reporters, edgin' them over to the door, "except that it is a vicious mass of distorted facts and lying insinuations! I have no doubt that both my father and Senator Brewster will have a statement to make later. Good morning, gentlemen!"

"Fair enough!" says the thin guy, steppin' to the door.

"Is it true that you're engaged to Miss Brewster?" pipes up another one.

"None of your damned business!" barks the Kid, now on edge.

Nobody was slow gettin' through the door.

At that minute the phone rings, and the Kid, bein' nearest, answered. It was no less than Senator Brewster himself, and from the Kid's face and his chokin' interruptions, I could see the boy was takin' punishment! At last he hangs up and turns to me, frownin' and bitin' his lip. I am all set for the bawlin' out of my life.

"Well, go ahead and tie into me, Kid," I says gloomily. "I'm the dumb-bell which spilled the limas, and—"

"No," says the Kid, his face clearin'. "It wasn't your fault at all. You didn't fathom the girl's shrewdness, and I wouldn't have either. We've both

already talked too much to a very clever reporter! Cloaking her real purpose under the request for an interview for the sporting page, our friend Joan Stillwell scored a notable victory for the senator's enemies. According to her rather peculiar lights, I suppose she did a good job!" He pats my shoulder. "Cheer up," he adds; "it can't be helped now. For your sake as well as the senator's, I'm sorry she bilked us—you *were* rather hard hit, weren't you?"

"I fell—sure!" I admits. "But that's all over now. I guess that stuff about her kid brother bein' a scrapper was the bunk too—hey?"

"Probably," says the Kid with a hard, short laugh. "Though that was a touch that approached art! We'll never see her again, at any rate. I'll wager she's laughing herself sick right now at the way she took us in!"

But we did see her again, and she wasn't laughin' either.

We was gettin' ready to go down and put on the feed bag, when once again the phone makes good and again the Kid answers it. This time he says: "Come right up!" in a funny voice, hangs up, and turns to me with a smile. "Stand a slight shock?" he says.

"*Now* what the—eh—what's the matter?" I hollers, jumpin' up. "Who was that?"

"Miss Joan Stillwell," answers the Kid.

Then there's a knock at the door, and I flung it wide open with a snarl. Joan was there all right and, sore as I was—I was more *hurt* than mad, anyways—I noticed she was as bewilderin' as ever! She's been

doin' a piece of weepin' also, as I seen when she raised her veil and stepped kind of hesitatin'ly inside. Kid Roberts pulls over a chair for her with a stiff bow—mad or otherwise, the boy was always a gent.

"Well," I sneers, standin' beside her chair, "what are you figurin' on puttin' over *now,* hey?"

With that she buries her billion-dollar face in her hands and busts right out cryin'!

This was all different, and me and the Kid looks at each other in the greatest of surprise. The first thing I know I am pattin' a silk-clad shoulder and whisperin' sweet nothin's at where I guessed her ear was, and on the other side Kid Roberts is doin' ditto. A couple of fine, strong men, hey?

"I suppose you—you loathe me!" says Joan to me with quiverin' lips.

"Do I look it?" I says kind of sadly. The Kid smiles sarcastically, and this seems to get her goat.

"Won't both of you at least listen to an explanation?" she asks. "You don't have to believe it, you know."

"No," says the Kid, still smilin' politely but coldly, "we don't have to believe it. Eh—proceed, Miss Stillwell; I'm sure you will be interesting."

Her face floods with red at that, but she was game! Me—I'm completely gone again! I even managed to slip her a encouragin' look, and got a glance in exchange for it that repaid me with usurious interest.

"I want you to know that I was innocent of any malicious intent when I got that interview from you," she says, the words just tumblin' out. "I was not trying to be cunning or clever or—or—anything! I wrote that interview as a straight sporting story, putting

no value on the—the—political weapons you accidentally placed in my hands, beyond the fact that they lent color and romance to my yarn. But the sporting editor, with his horrid trained nose for news, sniffed out my story's *news* value and gave it to the city editor. With the aid of a rewrite man and the staff political writers, he did the rest! They showed me the proofs of my rehashed copy, and I stormed and pleaded to have it kept out of the paper, without avail. Why, that man actually patted me on the back and promised me a bonus for what he said was a shrewd piece of work on my part. I am not shrewd! I didn't mean to be—I—I *hate* that word—I—well, I immediately resigned, that's all! And now—"

The Kid reaches for his hat. "And now," he repeats after her, "will you come with me and tell all that to Senator Brewster, Miss Stillwell? It will help every one of us immensely if you will, and I, for one, believe your story without question."

"Why, I'll be only too glad to explain to the Senator," says Joan. "Of course I'll go."

"Just a minute, Miss Stillwell. Was that stuff about your brother bein' a box fighter—eh—was *that* level too?" I butts in.

"He's going to box at the Aldine Athletic Club tonight," she says. "But I suppose *now* you won't bother to—"

"You suppose wrong," I says. "I'll go over and see him, as advertised. And don't you let Senator Brewster bawl you out either. We're all apt to make mistakes, as Eve remarked."

Well, that night, as they say in the movies. I eased

into a ringside seat at the Aldine A. C. in Newark at exactly 9.30, and at exactly 9.33 Joan's brother, "Young Stillwell," climbed through the ropes to earn the fifty bucks he was guaranteed for a six-round preliminary with another boloney. At exactly 9.50 I had what I firmly believed to be the next lightweight champion signed to a contract puttin' him under my management for a term of three years, subject to sister Joan's approval. There is nothin' I like so much as speed!

The "lightweight" in the opposite corner from Young Stillwell must of tipped the beam at 150 if he weighed a gram, whilst Joan's kid brother looked well under 135. He was far from handsome, accordin' to collar advertisement standards, but he sure looked beautiful to *me!* This baby had a pair of shoulders on him like a heavyweight, the short, thick neck, square jaw, high cheek bones, thin lips, and beetlin', rugged brow of the natural-born fighter which craves no other weapons but his hands. His legs was the muscular limbs of the distance runner and as he flexed himself against the ropes whilst awaitin' the bell, his powerful arms showed a wonderful reach. That the mob was with him was displayed when he first jumped into the ring and shed his bath robe. The first time he looked at the guy he was goin' to fight was when they shook hands in mid ring and went to work.

It was a wow of a brawl whilst it lasted, but a minute ain't very long. Never in your life have you seen such a change as come over Young Stillwell with the sound of the bell. The grin left his thin lips like magic, and he licked 'em hungrily with the snarl of a short-tempered panther. The heavy brows drawed together,

almost meetin' in a curvin', shaggy line as he shot off that stool like he'd been released with a spring. The other guy was tough and willin', but that wasn't enough. Stillwell hit him with everything but the club's license and the timekeeper, floorin' his man three times before the referee declared a armistice. His handlers dragged him to his corner, still lookin' back at what he left on the floor and still snarlin'. Joan's bloodcurdlin' brother wasn't satisfied with just a win—he wanted to *finish* his man. That baby was a fightin' fool!

Well, Young Stillwell liked to passed away when the club matchmaker banged on his dressin'-room door and told him that the manager of the world's heavyweight champion wished a word with him. This man-eatin' tiger was so timid that he couldn't speak.

I was already plannin' how I'd ease him along, teach him to hit from the shoulder, and knock 'em stiff with *one* wallop, instead of beatin' 'em down slowly with a hundred pulled from the ankle.

He nearly went cuckoo with joy when I told him he would get a chance to help condition Kid Roberts for his comin' championship battle with Knockout Pierce, as part of his own trainin', and I could of signed him to a agreement right then and there givin' me 90 per cent of his earnin's. But I give Young Stillwell a fair contract—in fact, what many's the pilot would call a sucker contract, with me the sucker.

Within the week Jimmy McManus, the fight promoter, called me and Knockout Pierce's manager into a conference, with the results that the date for the big quarrel was fin'ly set for two months later. Knock-

out Pierce wanted to make it the same day, but ten years from then would of hit *me* better!

I rounded up Kid Roberts and told him to cancel all games he had scheduled with Dolores and Senator Brewster, because he was goin' to hit for the Maine woods immediately to ready up for Knockout Pierce. Before I was halfways through he shut me off and begin to rave about the palace he had built on Long Island for him and Dolores. The last brick had just been laid a few days before, and nothin' would do but I must come right down with him and look it over. He was like a baby with a new toy, and bubbled away about the "blue room" and the "red room" and the gardens and this and that. He was less interested in the date of his fight with Knockout Pierce than a shark is interested in the price of ice skates. Before I realize it I am huddled beside him in his racin' car, burnin' the roads to Long Island.

Well, there is no use of me describin' the Kid's domicile, because that would make a serial itself. They seemed to be upward of a million rooms in it—rooms full of rugs which you sunk in up to your knees, and furniture which would of brought a pleased grin from Midas. They was a large, private swimmin' pool lookin' like pictures of the old Roman baths, a fully equipped gymnasium with a regulation ring and the etc., a ballroom that—exercise your own imagination, boys and girls, on the rest of the layout, and the wilder you guess the nearer you'll come!

Fin'ly we come to two big rooms joined together and openin' into a bathroom as big as the average flat.

There was a elegant view of the Sound from the windows, and it looked to me like there was every modern convenience in it with the exception of a airplane and maybe a private theater.

"A dude of a cave, Kid," I says admirin'ly. "Why—"

"I'm glad you like it," he butts in, throwin' his arm around my shoulders, "because—it's *yours!*"

Sweet Mamma! Can you imagine that?

Well, I don't know when I got the kick out of life like I did when Kid Roberts made that simple remark. In spite of the difference in our pedigrees and that it was only a accident which ever throwed us together at all, he was with me right to the end! He wanted me to come and live in his house with him, just like one of the family, and he must of knowed as *I* did that Dolores, which would be havin' the place filled with her society friends, would holler murder at the idea of a roughneck like me bein' a permanent ornament about the house. Yet for me the Kid was willin' to risk a jam with her. But I wasn't willin' to let him. I didn't want nothin' to come up which would start the faintest argument on my account, so after I thanked the Kid all over the place I explained to him that I'd be out of order there, or, at least, that I'd feel that way, and besides, I couldn't get out of the fight game with the ease that he was goin' to, because box fightin' is the only game I know. He broke in on me many times, tellin' me he'd take me in partnership with him and his dad, but I couldn't see that part of it either. Where in the Hades would I fit in Wall Street and society? Even whilst the Kid argued with me, my mind was

wanderin'. Wanderin' back to Young Stillwell, which I was goin' to make lightweight champion of the world as sure as the ocean is damp and just as I made Kid Roberts king of the heavies. Kid Roberts was through after his fight with Knockout Pierce, but I had to continue on at the trade I was born to—and king maker ain't so bad a trade at that! You see, the story of Kid Roberts represents practically *his* whole career, but it's just a chapter in *my* life. Just a chapter!

I told the Kid about Young Stillwell and what I hoped to do with him, and when he seen it was no use to argue further he grinned and wished me luck, particularly in convincin' Joan that a box fighter ain't necessarily a bum. Well, on that point I had hopes, because I had managed to make the girl agree to see her brother box *once,* and I promised to tear up my contract with the boy if she asked me to after that. This come about in a odd way. There was what the Kid would call a incident happened which give me the delightful sensations of bein' a hero for a spell.

Havin' convinced Senator Brewster that she hadn't double-crossed us with that article in the Newark "Evenin' Yell," Joan was on one of Dolores' committees, campaignin' with her for the female vote. The senator's campaignin' manager, Mike Henderson, a wise old bird and a veteran at political tricks, took the angle that Joan's story in the Newark paper, which had been reprinted in New York, would do the senator more good than harm. He claimed the broadcast publication of the fact that his daughter was goin' to marry a box fighter would make a unqualified hit with the rough

and readys, whilst the hint of his Wall Street connections, even though exaggerated, would do him no harm with that type of vote. Altogether, Big Mike was well pleased and had congratulated Joan in the Senator's office, prob'ly fallin' under the spell of them eyes himself. Joan would of gave a mummy a thrill! Senator Brewster, whilst not as enthusiastic as Henderson, had forgave Joan and was undoubtlessly interested in her.

But, anyways, Joan was speakin' from the back of a auto down on Tenth Avenue one night, with me and her brother along as bodyguards. We was right in the middle of the guy's territory which was runnin' against Senator Brewster, and there was some tough-lookin' babies gathered around the bus. The whole thing didn't take fifteen minutes, but that was long enough to close my right eye tighter than a drum and loosen a few odd teeth. Somebody made a insultin' crack, and Young Stillwell goes over the side of the car in one leap, both hands pumpin' fast. Joan let forth a shriek, and a guy jumpin' on the runnin' board copped the chauffeur on the jaw.

I flattened that baby with a chop on the side of the head, and then I figured that if Young Stillwell got badly hurt I would be out one comin' champion, whereas if I got beat up it wouldn't mean nothin'. Havin' got that settled I jumped into the strugglin' mass around the car, layin' about me right merrily, as the sayin' is. I ain't much of a gymnasium boxer myself, but if I do say it I fight a mean street brawl! There was two guys workin' on Stillwell, and I yanked him in back of me, pushin' him into the car whilst I buried my knee in the stomach of one of 'em and, with-

out losin' position, socked the other one stiff with a right uppercut that not even Kid Roberts would of had to apologize for. The chauffeur had come to life by this time and started the motor, and after I have distributed a few more clouts where they would do the most good and—eh—stopped a few myself, I managed to jump back into the car again and we shot away, and that's all there was to that.

Joan wiped my face off with her handerchief and made a heavy fuss over me for "rescuin" her, as she put it, whereas, to be frank with you, the main thing I was thinkin' of when I went over the top of that auto was that under no circumstances did I want my comin' champ beat up!

Well, I couldn't get Kid Roberts to come away from New York and Dolores, although four times we split up for good as a result of arguments over his ideas of trainin' for a championship fight. The best he would do was some mechanical boxin' and weight pullin' a few hours a day. There was times when I didn't even see him for days, and that's the way the two months went by till the day of the battle with Knockout Pierce and the last appearance in the ring of Kid Roberts.

I had Joan's brother set for one of the preliminaries. He was to go six rounds with "Shifty" Mullen —a tough boy—and I demanded and got $500 for him, more money than Young Stillwell had ever seen before in his life. As she promised, Joan was there beside me at the ringside, white-faced and tremblin', braced to see a bloody slaughter. The absence of his usual reception from the bigger, noisier, and nastier

mob, the presence of his sister seein' him start for the first time, and the sullen glare across the ring of the rugged, experienced Shifty Mullen, all bothered this young wildcat the same way they are bothered in Iceland over the price of electric fans. Fightin' was Young Stillwell's gift—his trick! He touched gloves with Mullen, danced back till he felt the ropes against his skin, and then bounded off 'em like a maniac—nothin' else. The hard-boiled Mullen clipped him on the chin with a terrible right as he was comin' in, and then stepped away to let him fall. Young Stillwell grinned over to Joan and went to work on the body with both hands. Mullen tried everything he knew, but it was a waste of time. In two and a half minutes Young Stillwell had battered him to the canvas, where he was only too glad to stay—all through.

The boy got a big hand leavin' the ring, and Joan, her eyes sparklin', led the cheering. Her brother was back from the dressin' room in no time, unmarked, unruffled, and grinnin' his head off. I pulled him aside and slipped him the whole five hundred berries. I didn't take a nickel from the boy—the purse was too small, and then, again, I knowed I'd get mine later. He dumps the bills into Joan's lap and shouts that I've guaranteed him twenty thousand the next year. They was still excitedly chatterin' away to each other as Young Stillwell led her down the aisle and out, and a blind man could see Joan was a convert.

But Kid Roberts's fight—his last battle—was all different, and I was mighty glad that Joan had left the abattoir and that Dolores had kept away. Up against a remarkably clever, two-handed hitter, which had the

priceless advantage of youth, perfect condition, reach, and about twelve pounds in weight, the champion fought a losin' fight almost from the first bell. The old stamina wasn't there, the old perfect timin' of punches was gone, the once terrible right hook had lost its kick.

Too much confidence, too much easy livin', chasin' around at all hours of the day and night makin' speeches for Senator Brewster, and the most fatal—holdin' Knockout Pierce too cheaply—told the story. With everything missin' but his heart, Kid Roberts fought eleven bloody, desperate rounds on that alone before goin' out like the champ of champs he was! He didn't need to make no apologies as he staggered down the aisle to his dressin' room after it was all over, between rows of guys which had gone crazy cheerin' him, and still kept on cheerin' him, ignorin' the flushed and pantin' new champion till they had give the Kid his due. That must of helped a little, hey?

Nobody amongst the odd 30,000 screamin' maniacs which seen Kid Roberts go down before Knockout Pierce sat on a chair from the first round to the finish—nobody could speak above a whisper for days afterward. At the very beginnin' there was enough sensation to satisfy Nero! After some light sparrin', the Kid led with his left, but was short and got a crack on the nose in return that brought the blood and a yell from Pierce's friends of "How d'ye like him, Roberts?" Again the Kid tried his left, and this time landed solidly on the mouth, but Pierce shook his head and drove a wicked right to the wind and a left to the heart, showin' he had been tipped on the Kid's poor condition, and was

instructed to work on the body. They exchanged light jabs in Pierce's corner, and, in dancin' away, Pierce slipped to the floor. Kid Roberts instantly stooped and helped him up, gettin' a big hand from the crowd and a shake from Pierce, who then suddenly ripped another right to the heart. The Kid's face paled and down come his guard. Wam! Like a flash Pierce had hooked his left to the jaw, and the champ sprawled on his back whilst the house was in a wild uproar.

Roberts was up at "seven," groggy but full of fight. He tried to rush Pierce, but this guy stepped coolly aside and floored the Kid again with a right chop to the side of the head. The Kid got to his hands and knees, pulled himself erect by the ropes, and, only waitin' till he straightened up with his arms danglin' helplessly, Pierce shot over two more hard rights, crashin' him again to the mat.

By this time the mob was tearin' up the seats, and I had bit entirely through my lower lip. The champion just beat the count by a eyelash, got up reelin', but had generalship enough left to fold his arms over his head and dive into a clinch. Pierce, strong as a young bull, shook him off, however, and was measurin' him for the finisher when the bell rang. Knockout Pierce run to his corner, wavin' his gloves at the crazy mob. The Kid sagged over against the ropes and would of fell through 'em if I hadn't grabbed him. His eyes was starin' vacantly at nothin'.

Well, a round-by-round account of this battle would not be pretty, and it brings back no fond memories to me, except to remind me of a exhibition of courage which has been seldom equaled and never surpassed in

the history of a game where courage is the first requirement. From that heartbreakin' first round on, the Kid was on Queer Street, battlin' without a chance and battlin' on the pure fightin' instinct which must of been bred into him by centuries of thoroughbred stock.

In the fourth round Knockout Pierce devoted all his attention to the Kid's reddened body, and one of the champion's ribs, busted a year before by Dynamite Jackson, cracked again under the bombardment, changin' the Kid's complexion to a sickly gray with pain from then on. In Round Seven, Pierce closed the Kid's right eye tight, and in the ninth shut the other. Blinded, unable even to see where his punches was goin', the Kid wouldn't let me throw in the sponge, but stood up to his beatin' like somethin' even higher than a champion—if there *is* any such thing! Even the guys which had bet on Pierce was tearin' the air now with their cheers for Kid Roberts—or maybe their cheers was not so much for the battered, grimly pawin' Kid as they was for the fightin' heart which kept his tremblin' body erect. Man, pan the fight game all you want—call it brutal, disgustin', crooked, sordid, anything you please, but don't say you can't get a *kick* out of it!

In the tenth round Kid Roberts made a dyin' rally that panicked the already hysterical mob. Findin' Pierce, by instinct alone it must of been, he split his nose with a straight left and drove him to cover against the ropes with a desperate flurry of hooks and swings. But that was the last. Nature was beginnin' to reach for the sponge now! Yet this big stiff Pierce, his

own heart broke by the Kid's superhuman exhibition of gameness, seemed unable to land the finishin' blow—the clean knockout which would of wound it up mercifully. I cursed that guy for a tramp till the referee warned me, as he cut and slashed wildly at the swayin', blinded champ, every blow that socked against that boy bein' a knife in my own poundin' heart.

Then, in the middle of the eleventh round, I couldn't stand it no longer! Kid Roberts, holdin' himself up with one arm on the ropes was feebly tryin' to protect himself with the other from a hurricane of rights and lefts to the head. Pierce was too excited at the prospects of a knockout to stand off and measure him, but was batterin' him to pieces with short, choppy blows. With tears that I ain't ashamed of streamin' down my face, I jumped through the ropes, pushed past the referee in between 'em and caught the Kid in my arms, shovin' my face into Pierce's and yellin' in a voice that I didn't recognize: "Leave him alone, you big stiff. You'll make a fine champ, *you* will! You're a hell of a finisher—you can't knock a dyin' man stiff!"

Then half the crowd was in the ring with me, and Knockout Pierce stood alone, whilst the mob fought to shake the hand of the loser.

For many's the week afterward the sport writers panned me to a fare-thee-well, arguin' that I lost Kid Roberts the title by committin' the foul of jumpin' into the ring. They claimed the Kid might of come back—that with *his* heart he *always* had a chance while he was in there. Well, boys and girls, that's what I jumped in for. I wanted them babies to think just that! It was about the last thing I could do for Kid Roberts.

anyways. The boy was licked, as they all have to be some time. Why should I let that big stiff cut him to pieces? I made him lose on a foul and saved him at least the disgrace a champ never forgets—bein' knocked stiff!

Well, that's about all. Senator Brewster was re-elected; I don't remember by how much majority, but if it was *one* it was enough, hey? He presented Joan with a job as his private secretary and Dolores with a check for $250,000 when she married Kid Roberts, or Kane Halliday again now, a month after the fight. I had the exactin' portfolio of best man at the weddin' and Joan was a bridesmaid. It was a very quiet affair, no hullabaloo what the so ever, and they sailed for Europe right afterward, leavin' the loneliest guy in the world on the dock, meanin' me. I went back to the hotel, looked in the Kid's room which he would never occupy again, cussed a bit, and begin linin' up a campaign amongst the set-ups for Young Stillwell. Not bein' able to keep my mind on the subject, what with all the excitement and the etc., I called up Joan and, usin' nerve which I never thought was in me, I asked her could I take her to dinner and then maybe to a show. She said she'd be tickled silly, which made it two people which felt that way. I asked about Jimmy, her brother, and she says he's fine and is now goin' to bed at nine and gettin' up at six to do his road work.

"I hear nothing day and night but what a wonderful person you are," she says. "Jimmy already looks upon you as his big brother!"

"Eh—oh, he'll get over that," I says, kind of thrilled.

"Maybe *he* will," says Joan, very soft, "but *I* won't!"

A couple of months later we sent the Kid a cable to Monte Carlo. I would liked to of seen his face when he read it.

THE END

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